

ABSTRACT

PREACHING TO CULTIVATE A WHOLE-PERSON RESPONSE IN THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

by

Shane Alden Brue

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in the worship participants of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, as a result of a twelve-sermon series on biblical Christian outreach. This research was a cohort study in the quasi-experimental mode utilizing a pre-, mid-, and posttest design with no comparison group. Data revealed significant cognitive and behavioral change from pre- to posttest. The findings support the premise that preaching biblical sermons that give attention to the whole person can facilitate positive change in hearer's response to Christian outreach.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Background

I have been a pastor or a staff member of eight different United Methodist churches in the Northwest Texas Annual Conference. None of the congregations I have served effectively reached out into their communities. Many other congregations with which I am familiar seem to have the same struggle.

Motivating people to respond in loving Christian outreach in their communities is a difficult and perplexing task. I have struggled to get church members to be involved in ministry to people outside the church walls. Often my motivation strategy was simply guilt-inducing preaching on Sunday morning, yet I never thought this method was effective in bringing the needed change. As a result, I often led the charge into Christian outreach ministry only to find out I was the only one attacking. Since leadership requires followers, I soon realized I was not leading my congregation into Christian outreach at all.

Despite my early failure, I still believe the pulpit is the first and most powerful means of shaping the community of faith. Since the “foolishness of preaching” (1 Cor. 1:21) still has power, I believe that pastors need to tap into the power of preaching to move people outside the walls of the church and reach out into their communities for the sake of Christ. This study sought to find a more effective way of facilitating positive responses to Christian outreach among church members through the means of preaching. The premise behind this study is that the way to facilitate Christian outreach is by facilitating positive response to the subject through the use of biblical messages that

appeal to the intellect, emotion, and behavior of those who attend the worship service.

The cultivation of a positive response (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) to Christian outreach would logically result in increased ministry to the community, which is informed by biblical insight and motivated by love.

Congregational Context

This dissertation used the survey and interview results of a ministry project conducted at St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas. I became pastor of this church in June 2003. Abilene is a midsized city of just over 116,000 set in west Texas. The congregation was organized in 1962. The facility the congregation now occupies has developed through three phases of construction. The structure includes a small sanctuary that seats 170 to 185, offices and Sunday school rooms, a fellowship hall, and a children's area. The children's section is used five days a week by St. James Child Development Center and independent children's day care.

The church property is located in a busy neighborhood in South Abilene. The property is near an elementary School, a middle school, and a YMCA that sits in the middle of large city park. A nonprofit United Methodist retirement center is also located in the neighborhood. The schools and park flank the church campus on the south and east, with a residential neighborhood filling the blocks to the north and west. Two other churches are located within five blocks of St. James—a small Assembly of God congregation and a small Seventh Day Adventist Church. Most of the members of the congregation live in South Abilene, but only a few live in the immediate neighborhood.

The membership of the church at the end of the year 2002 was 385 with 413 at the end of 2003. The yearly worship attendance average was 118 in 2002, 109 for the first

half of 2003, with the year ending at 125. The congregation worships in two services on Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. The church records for the history of the congregation indicate that membership, worship attendance, and professions of faith have been in decline for the fourteen years prior to the study, with the exception of 2003.

Along with the declining membership, worship attendance, Sunday school attendance, baptisms, and professions of faith, possibly the most pertinent information about the congregation is the obvious lack of effective Christian outreach. The congregation has outreach and witness committees. The outreach committee meets to discuss and implement some social ministry to the poor in the community. The witness committee, tasked with leading the church in evangelism activities is largely inactive. No obvious group or individual efforts to reach out to unbelievers or unchurched people exist.

Needs Assessment

In the summer and fall of 2003, I sought to understand the specific needs of the congregation and their aspirations regarding the future of the church. The congregation's Staff-Parish Relation Committee communicated to me in our first meeting together that the congregation wanted to grow. Upon arriving in Abilene, I met individually with many of the congregation's leaders to gauge their personal understanding of the congregation's need and desire to grow. These meetings revealed a strong belief that the congregation needed and wanted to grow.

Along with personal conversations with leaders, I hosted a series of get-togethers at my home for Sunday school classes and for those who were not actively involved in Sunday school. In each of these get-togethers, after a meal and an ice-breaking activity, I

asked the group present to express their hopes and dreams for St. James. The response was overwhelmingly positive. The groups believed the church wanted and needed to grow. Even more, the groups expressed a desire to reach out into their community and gather people, especially families with young children.

Together, these experiences confirmed several things about St. James United Methodist Church: (1) The majority of the leaders and members recognized the need for growth and outreach at St. James, and (2) These same leaders and members were excited about the possibility of reaching into our community and bringing people to faith in Christ and into fellowship with our church.

The Problem

Like St. James United Methodist Church, the vast majority of churches do not reach out effectively in their communities. Even though many desire to reach out and grow, most never do. A good number of churches have programs intended to reach out and committees that talk a lot about reaching out, but the sad facts show that very few churches are effectively drawing nonmembers into the life of the church, thereby having the best chance of bringing them to faith in Jesus Christ.

In a year-end review of three dozen survey-based reports in 2002, researcher George Barna notes a set of seven paradoxes, apparent contradictions in respondents' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs related to their faith. One of the contradictions highlighted was the paradox of ineffective outreach ("Barna Identifies").

In the same review, Barna notes that among Protestant pastors evangelism and outreach ranked as the top priority for churches. Another survey indicated that Christian churches would raise and spend more than \$50 billion on domestic ministry in 2002. The

results of these surveys would seem to speak well of the American church and its efforts to reach out to the unchurched. Nevertheless, the paradox becomes evident with some of Barna's later surveys, which show that the proportion of both non-Christian adults and unchurched adults has remained unchanged since 2000. Even more, since the general population of the United States has increased, the number of unchurched and non-Christian people in the nation has actually increased. These surveys show that the American church is far from effective in Christian outreach:

Regardless of its true character and intent, the Christian community is not known for love, or for a life-transforming faith.... Outdated means of outreach, inappropriate assumptions about people's faith, and a lack of passion for helping non-believers to receive God's love and acceptance are hindering the Church from fulfilling its mandate. America remains one of the largest mission fields in the world, and the American Church remains the most richly endowed body of believers on the planet. There is no lack of potential. ("Barna Identifies")

The number of unchurched and non-Christian people in the United States continues to grow. George G. Hunter, III reports that the 150 million secular people in this nation make the United States of America the largest mission field in the western hemisphere and the third largest in the world ("Church for the Unchurched"). Faced with these grim facts, the Church must push past the barriers to effective outreach or face becoming even less successful in bringing the life-changing power of the gospel to bear in the lives of people, communities, and the nation.

Definitions

This work used two particular terms that need clear definitions. They are Christian outreach and whole-person response.

Christian Outreach

Webster defines "Outreach" as "to reach or extend beyond; to surpass," and "the

process of reaching out” (597). Considering this definition, Christian outreach can be understood as the process of extending beyond the boundaries of those who know Christ. Within the Church, Christian outreach reaches or extends beyond the parameters of the congregation to those who are not involved in a church and to those who do not believe in Christ.

Motivation for outreach is an important consideration within a congregation. Christian outreach is a person’s response (thoughts, feelings, actions) born out of love for God and love for people made in the image of God. If the motivation is not centered in love for God and love for people, outreach can no longer be called “Christian.” Outreach that is simply recruitment for church participation or membership loses its other-centered motivation and becomes self-serving. While the congregation and those reached will both benefit from the church’s Christian outreach, the motivation must not be based in what the church can gain from the activity. Practically speaking, Christian outreach can come in many different forms. Since a whole-person response is sought, the whole person should be involved in outreach.

For the purpose of this study, *Christian outreach* is defined as those thoughts, feelings, and actions that extend the ministry of Christ beyond the doors of the Church with the purpose of bringing people into the church and to faith in Jesus Christ. Christian outreach includes prayer, hospitality, servant evangelism, pastoral care, need-meeting ministries, personal invitation, and other programs and activities that focus ministry on those outside the congregation for the purpose of bringing people into the church and to faith in Jesus Christ.

Christian outreach can also include Church members’ responses that contribute to

the process of bringing nonattendees into the life of the congregation, whether the person is a believer or an unbeliever. Again, this definition of Christian outreach focuses more on the response of church members (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) than it does the response of the nonbeliever and the unchurched. Steve Sjogren calls his form of Christian outreach “servant evangelism” and describes it as “low risk, high grace,” meaning that the risk of the church member is low and the reliance on the grace of God is high (68). Since God through the Holy Spirit is the only one who can truly bring someone to faith in Jesus Christ, the congregation must rely on God’s grace rather than on their own efforts. When believers rely on their powers of persuasion or techniques of sharing the gospel, they tend to rely less on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Christian outreach and evangelism are linked but not synonymous. For this study, evangelism is actually speaking the gospel to nonbelievers with the ultimate goal being their conversion. While Christian outreach aims at conversion, it does not require that the one reaching out speak the gospel to a nonbeliever. Christian outreach also does not require the person being reached become a believer to be successful. If the person is encouraged to believe in Jesus Christ or to participate in the life of the church through the response of believes, then Christian outreach has been successful. This description of success in Christian outreach focuses on the response of the one reaching out, not on the one being reached. William Abraham’s definition of evangelism merits consideration: “[Evangelism is] that set of intentional activities which is governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time” (95).

Whole-Person Response

For this study, *whole-person response* is defined as those thoughts, feelings, and

actions that come from the worship attendees as a result of the sermon series. A whole-person practice of Christian outreach is a living expression of the great commandment:

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this; Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)

A believer’s response to Christian outreach must flow out of love for God and love for others. That response of love cannot simply be behavior. Instead, God calls his people to respond to him and to others from the center of their being through thoughts, feelings, and actions. The whole person engages in the expression of love. This study provides a context to prove that a broader understanding of a congregation’s response to Christian outreach must be adopted. It must include not only behavior but thoughts and feelings as well.

Primary and Contributing Factors of Ineffective Christian Outreach

Several primary factors are involved in the lack of effective Christian outreach in the American church. Each of the possible factors is related to the belief systems (cognitive), emotions (affective), and actions (behavioral) of church members (see Table 1.1). In addition to these primary factors, numerous contributing factors were considered.

Beliefs

Often, church members have negative or inaccurate beliefs regarding Christian outreach. Abraham makes this point clear:

Our conceptions of evangelism have a profound effect on our evangelistic practices. Fundamentally, they set up the criteria of success or failure, and thus they determine the forms of accountability for our ministry in this area. They also provide the basic starting-point for decisions about evangelistic strategy. (164)

One pervasive example of an inaccurate belief is that many assume Christian outreach is something that only the pastor, hired staff, or outreach committee does. This *elitism* places the monumental task of Christian outreach on only a few rather than on the whole congregation. Typically, in response to this belief, the pastor, hired staff, or outreach committee feels overwhelmed by the huge task of reaching out so they simply quit trying. As R. Paul Stevens describes, throughout most of the Church's history a separation has existed between lay and clergy. Laypeople are not the subjects of ministry, only the objects. Laypeople receive ministry, pay for it, promote it, and maybe even hope to do it, but they never quite become ministers for various theological, structural, and cultural reasons (3).

Another example of an inaccurate belief pertains to the importance of Christian outreach in the growth and health of the church. Since 80 percent of all churches in the United States have plateaued or are in decline (Childers), reaching unchurched and unbelieving people is essential. Nevertheless, church members often consider ministries that meet the needs of the congregation's members to be more important than any efforts to reach out beyond the membership into the community. "Take care of our own" mentality regarding resource allocation permeates the decision-making process. *Unimportance* marks the thinking of many congregations toward the idea of Christian outreach.

A final example of an inaccurate belief is that Christian outreach is simply evangelism by a different name. A major barrier of preconceived mental models or "boxes" of evangelism (Richardson 17) keeps Christians from reaching out in new ways. The *old models of evangelism* invoke negative examples of door-to-door, cold calling that

amounts to pestering people with the gospel. Few church people want to be involved in evangelistic activity that might implement this hard-sell approach. As a result, many churches move to the opposite extreme and adopt a hands-off mentality that favors a “let them come if they want” approach.

Emotions

Negative emotions affect church members, responses to Christian outreach. If people do not associate a positive feeling with Christian outreach, they will likely not think or act positively to Christian outreach. Evidence supports the independent role of feelings in influencing attitude. Research shows that assessing both cognitive and affective elements are more effective in understanding attitude than using either of these elements independently (O’Keefe 68).

Because of its association with evangelism, outreach often draws out some negative or apathetic emotions in people. *Fear* is one of the prevailing responses when faced with the opportunity to be involved in anything that might appear evangelistic. Fear of rejection, fear of imposition, and fear of ridicule top the list of church members’ phobias.

If church members do not feel fear, they are likely to feel *apathy*. In many cases, lack of concern keeps believers on the sidelines of Christian outreach. In either case, these feelings of fear or indifference stifle Christian outreach.

Actions

Inactivity and *negative behavior* impinge on the effectiveness of Christian outreach. While many churches and church members will say that outreach is important, the old adage is true: “Actions speak louder than words.” Aubrey Malphurs discusses this

disconnect. “Leaders and organizations have both actual and aspirational core values. Actual values are the beliefs they [the members of the organization] own and act on daily” (52). The only real difference between actual values and aspirational values is behavior. So, when church members do not actually get involved in outreach, their actions are communicating that outreach is not important, despite what they might say.

In the great “silent entrenchment” of the last third of the twentieth century, most churches ceased doing much proactive outreach at all. In most cities, many of the growing churches are only responding to people who take the initiative to visit the church (Hunter, Celtic Way 121). Sending teams into the world to do outreach is almost never done today. Not only are churches not involved in outreach activities, but individual believers give little or no time in their schedules to connect purposefully with unchurched people. Even worse, at times, the behavior of church members actually repels the unchurched. With judgmental attitudes and lifestyles that are no different from unbelievers, church members paint an unappealing picture of life as a believer.

Table 1.1. Primary Factors of Ineffective Christian Outreach

Whole-Person Aspect	Factors
Cognitive	Elitism, unimportance, old models of evangelism
Affective	Fear, apathy
Behavioral	Noninvolvement, negative behavior

Contributing Factors

In addition to the fundamental factors of beliefs, emotions, and actions of church members regarding Christian outreach, noteworthy contributing factors are Church

leadership, cultural, and individual factors.

Church leadership. The pastor and other key leaders significantly impact the outreach of the congregation, often contributing to its ineffectiveness (see Table 1.2).

Lack of training emerges as one of the factors that church leadership must address. Churches often do not reach out because most of the people in churches have never been taught how to reach out. Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh state the case clearly that Christians who are not trained in evangelism are less likely to do evangelism, and people who do evangelism without training are less likely to be effective in reaching people. Evangelistic training should never elevate a certain method over a lifestyle. An organic, flexible approach to evangelism is consistent with each Christian's calling to whole-life discipleship (75).

Ephesians 4:11-12 reminds readers why God gave leaders to the local church:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, *to prepare God's people for works of service* [emphasis mine], so that the body of Christ may be built up.

If leadership is given to a church to prepare God's people for ministry, then certainly part of that preparation must be teaching people how to reach out into the community with the love of Jesus Christ.

The words of W. E. Diehl regarding the important task of preparation for ministry are striking:

In the almost thirty years of my professional career, my church has never once suggested that there be any type of accounting of my on-the-job ministry to others. My church has never once offered to improve those skills which could make me a better minister, nor has it ever asked if I needed any kind of support in what I was doing. There has never been an enquiry into the types of ethical decisions I must face, or whether I seek to communicate the faith to my co-workers. I have never been in a congregation where there was any type of public affirmation of my

ministry in my career. In short, I must conclude that my church doesn't have the least interest whether or how I minister in my daily work. (v-vi)

Much of the blame for this lack of preparation falls on the leadership of the church and, specifically, on the pastor. Pastors often complain about the lack of participation in ministry among their church members, yet these same pastors are not fulfilling their equipping role as mandated by Scripture.

Lack of encouragement also stands as an important factor in the ineffectiveness of a congregation's Christian outreach. Christian outreach does not extend into the community because pastors and church leaders seldom encourage and challenge congregations to be involved in outreach. Motivation is crucial in the process of mobilizing members for Christian outreach. Possibly the most important motivator in a church is the pastor. Among the tendencies of churches that prioritize evangelism, Barna lists expressions of regular encouragement (at least once a month) to the church body to focus on outreach (*Evangelism That Works* 170).

If congregations are to respond positively to the challenge of Christian outreach, pastors must lead the congregations in outreach with enthusiasm, by precept and example. The key to the formation of a missional community is the leadership. Leadership is a critical gift provided by the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of the mission (Guder et al. 183). The actual example of the pastor doing outreach gives authenticity to the messages of encouragement to respond in Christian outreach.

Lack of opportunity completes the list of church leadership factors considered in this study. Even with some training and encouragement, opportunities for people to be involved in organized outreach activities are often minimal. If people are forced to devise their own plans for Christian outreach, they are less likely to step out and actually do

outreach. Here again, the responsibility to provide occasions, situations, and groups for outreach sits squarely on the leadership of the church.

As mentioned above, often fear is involved in reaching out. One way to deal with this fear is to work with outreach teams or groups. One author suggests these groups should be multi-styled, utilizing a wide range of evangelistic approaches. The teams should not be dominated by one style or ministry emphasis but rather celebrate diversity in ministry and build on it (Mittelberg 181). The author goes on to suggest that evangelism (Christian outreach) groups should be “easy access,” with no expectations of previous experience or personal confidence.

Table 1.2. Contributing Factors: Church Leadership

Whole-Person Aspect	Factor
Cognitive	Lack of training
Affective	Lack of encouragement
Behavioral	Lack of opportunity

Culture. While some of the strongest influencers regarding Christian outreach are found within the congregation itself, numerous cultural factors must be considered in the overall deficiency of outreach. The cultural factors that must be considered include individualism, tolerance, pursuit of happiness, and business (see Table 1.3).

Individualism, though a valued part of the American spirit, is perhaps the cultural element that has the greatest negative impact on Christian outreach. Robert N. Bellah et al. note a national self-centered attitude:

Americans are seldom as selfish as the therapeutic culture urges them to

be. But often the limit of their serious altruism is the family circle. Thus the tendency of our individualism to dispose “each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends,” that so worried Tocqueville, indeed seems to be coming true. (112)

This individualistic culture works against the calling of God for Christians to reach out. Instead of moving beyond the small circle of the congregational “family” into the larger community, church members tend to remain in their “holy huddles,” unwilling to “go and make disciples” (Matt. 28:18).

Tolerance is another powerful hindrance to Christian outreach. American society values the rights of individuals to believe as they choose. This value taken to extremes brings an aversion to imposing personal beliefs on others. Church and religion are subjects that many believe are inappropriate to discuss with other people. Church members are influenced by a culture that tends to keep matters of faith more personal. Though many Christians believe they have a powerful, universal message to share, they hesitate to share it, thinking they may be labeled narrow-minded or dogmatic. Along with the desire to respect personal privacy and preserve a person’s freedom of choice, aversion to sharing personal belief may also stem from fear of rejection and loss of social status.

America’s individualism with respect to religion must be transformed by reconnecting it to the public realm (Bellah et al. 248). Instead of rejecting this powerful current in society, believers must seize this cultural trend and allow it to motivate them to show forth in their lives the faith that was in them by impacting the lives of others.

Pursuit of happiness in American society today is as strong as ever. The desire for personal happiness has all but superseded every other desire. Ever since Thomas Jefferson penned the immortal words of the Declaration of Independence, the nation’s

collective belief in the endowment of the unalienable right of “the pursuit of happiness” has been unquenchable. Again, Bellah et al. shed light on the subject: “For most of us, it is easier to think about how to get what we want than to know what exactly we should want” (21). People spend so much time trying to make themselves happy, they have less and less time to please God or help others know of God’s love. Church members are not so different from nonmembers in their attitudes towards their own happiness.

Preoccupation with pursuing personal happiness precludes that people in the church will be passionately engaged in the task of Christian outreach.

Busyness is a prevailing problem in the culture and the church. The pace of life has no doubt quickened. People work more and have less discretionary time, yet the busyness of life is not due solely to the culture. Barbra Moses explains that many people complain about being overworked, tired, and grumpy yet do little or nothing to alleviate the situation. While much busyness is real, to some degree many people have become addicted to this relentless pace. People seem to believe more and more the axiom, “I work; therefore, I am” (38-44).

When people fill their schedules with too many activities, they are much less likely to spend time involved in Christian outreach. In many cases, the busyness of Christians’ lives is made worse by the activities in which they are asked to participate within the congregation. An abundance of busyness waits inside the doors of the church as well as outside. In this case, congregational life has mirrored culture to the detriment of critical ministries such as Christian outreach.

Table 1.3. Contributing Factors: Culture

Whole-Person Aspect	Factor(s)
Cognitive	Individualism, tolerance
Affective	Pursuit of happiness
Behavioral	Busyness

Individual traits. Individual factors including personality, personal history, and experience certainly play a role in a person’s response to Christian outreach.

Nevertheless, the scope of this work does not allow an in-depth analysis of the possible individual factors since each person within the congregation represents a complex mixture of many individual factors.

Interaction of Whole-Person Aspects

Understanding the interaction between the whole-person aspects is of great value to anyone who wishes to cultivate positive responses in the whole-person domains.

Rational Emotive Behavioral Theory (REBT) was originated in 1955 by Albert Ellis.

Influenced by philosophers more than psychologists, Ellis believed as Epictetus stated:

“[M]en are disturbed not by things but by their views of things” (Dryden 6). Of

importance to this study is REBT’s understanding of the interconnection between a

person’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. These aspects of a person are best

conceptualized as being overlapping or interacting psychological processes. REBT is

perhaps best known for the emphasis it places on cognition and for its cognitive

restructuring components, yet the theory does fully acknowledge the affective and

behavioral components of human functioning. REBT stresses that these three

fundamental human psychological processes almost always interact and often do so in

complex ways (6). This study sought to address the interconnection between the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the congregation through preaching to the whole person.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundation for this study is the Trinity. Stephen Seamands calls Christians into a trinitarian pattern of ministry: “The ministry into which we have been called is the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son, to the Father through the Holy Spirit on behalf of the church and the world” (“Towards a Theology of Ministry”). All ministry must be understood as a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Ray S. Anderson affirms many kinds of ministry set in many contexts, yet suggests all ministries are forms of Christ’s ministry (“Theology for Ministry” 8).

Anderson continues his line of thinking with a clarification regarding the focus of ministry:

Christ’s primary ministry is to the Father for the sake of the world, not to the world for the sake of the Father. This means that the world does not set the agenda for ministry, but the Father, who loves the world and seeks its good, sets this agenda. (“Theology for Ministry” 8)

Even in ministries of outreach, where the needs of the community are crucial for measurable impact, ministry must be service to God. God’s purposes and plans are primary, and the needs and desires of people are secondary.

The role of the Holy Spirit in this ministry is one of empowerment. Through the Spirit, the ministry of Jesus Christ can continue in the ministry of the Church. The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them known to the Church (see John 16:13-14) and empowers the church to be Christ’s witnesses (see Acts 1:8). As the Church seeks to reach out beyond its own walls, the help of the Holy Spirit becomes paramount.

John 20:21-22 shows that God is a missionary God who sends others to be missionaries: “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Each member of the Trinity is present and involved in the sending of disciples. God is a sending God, and the Church is a sent people.

The drive for sending is found within God’s essence. God is love (1 John 4:8). God’s love (*agape*) is other-centered, unconditional positive regard. *Agape* flows out of the nature of God because *agape* is the nature of God. Seamands argues that the loving nature of the Trinity is the motivation for God’s actions towards humanity:

God’s going out of himself, first in the creation and then in the redemption and renewal of the world, flows out of the plenitude of love which exists in the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Out of the dynamic fullness of love and the joyful intimacy which exists *within* [original emphasis] the circle of the Trinitarian fellowship, flows God’s love for the world (John 3:16) *outside* [original emphasis] the circle. (“Trinity and Holiness”)

Purpose

Considering the lack of observable congregational activity in the area of Christian outreach at St. James United Methodist Church and the self-reported need for outreach and growth, this project sought to promote Christian outreach and encourage involvement. The lack of participation is in large part due to negative thoughts and feelings regarding Christian outreach. The principal communication tool available to the pastor is the sermons delivered at the primary worship services; therefore, the purpose of the study was to evaluate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in the worship participants of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, as a result of a twelve-sermon series on biblical Christian outreach presented over four months.

Research Question #1

What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach in the church before the preaching of the sermon series?

Research Question #2

What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach in the church after the preaching of the sermon series?

Research Question #3

What elements of the sermons' design and delivery were most effective in bringing changes in the cognition, affect, and behavior of the church to the subject of Christian outreach?

Research Question #4

What demographic variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's patterned responses to Christian outreach?

Description of Project

This project consisted of the preaching of a sermon series on Christian outreach and the evaluation of its effectiveness in changing cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to Christian outreach. The sermon series consisted of twelve Christian outreach sermons preached over a period of four months during the primary worship services of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas (see Table 1.4).

Stacy R. Minger utilized a preaching approach where the sermons were prepared to communicate the central idea of the text in a manner that invites a whole-person response through the use of a conversational delivery style, illustrations, positive emotional appeal, and life application (21). As a part of her study, Minger created the

three-component scale of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses (86), as well as a four-component sermon scale (87).

Table 1.4. Christian Outreach Sermons

Sermon Passages	Title	Theme
John 20:21-23	The Sent and Sending One	Trinity as missional community
Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 49:6	You Have a Bigger Job	The Old Testament precursors to Christian outreach
Matt. 22: 34-40	The Motive for Ministry	The Great Commandment before the great commission
Matt. 28:16-20	The Great Go-Mission	The Great Commission is our mission.
Acts 1:8	Empowered Witnesses	The Holy Spirit's empowerment of outreach
Matt. 9:35-38	He Feels our Pain	Jesus' example: Compassionate
John 1: 14	He is One of Us!	Jesus' example: Incarnational
Acts 16:6-10	Letting God Lead	Jesus' example: Father led
Matt. 14:13-21	Meeting Needs, Opening Hearts	Jesus' example: Need meeting
Matt. 4:24-29	Teachers of the Kingdom	Jesus' example: Formational
John 4:4-28	Crossing Barriers, Welcoming Strangers	Jesus' example: Hospitable
Heb. 10:9-10	Jesus' Sacrifice, and Ours	Jesus' example: Sacrificial

The whole-person approach that considers responses in thinking, feeling, and acting is central to a deeper understanding of biblical concepts (Chapell, Christ-Centered Preaching 166; Using Illustrations 49-66). Preaching should not be simply the presentation of propositional proofs but a catalyst for change in the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses of people. When preaching fails to consider the different dimensions of the person, it has less impact and a smaller chance of leading to lasting life change.

The evaluation of this sermon series was done through participant-completed surveys including a Christian outreach scale, a sermon scale, and three open-ended questions. The data was further developed using insights gleaned from a group feedback session, and follow-up interviews with volunteers who participated in the study.

Methodology

This was a cohort study in the quasi-experimental mode that utilized a pre-, mid-, and posttest design with no comparison group. Following the posttest, I facilitated a debriefing session and some semi-structured interviews with volunteers who participated in the study.

Subjects

The population for this study was all those who attend worship in a Christian church at least 25 percent of the time. The sample for this study was those who attended the 8:30 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. Sunday worship services of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, at least 25 percent of the time in the first quarter of 2004. Every adult (age 18 or older) who fit the 25 percent worship criteria was mailed each of the three surveys. The mailing invited the attendee to complete and return each of the survey questionnaires.

Variables

The independent variable of this research project was the sermon series. Twelve sermons were preached as four shorter series, three sermons each on consecutive Sundays in April-May 2004, May-June 2004, July 2004, and August 2004. These sermons were preached at the 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. worship services at St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas. While the biblical text dictated the content of each sermon,

special attention was also given to shaping the sermon by employing communication aids that would increase the listeners' receptivity and facilitate a whole-person response. These communication aids included the use of conversational delivery style, illustration, positive emotional appeal, and life application.

The dependent variables of this study are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in relation to Christian outreach experienced by the worship participants.

The demographic variables that might influence or help explain outcomes include age, gender, worship services attended, and number of years attended.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The primary instrument used to measure the effects of the sermons was a researcher-adapted questionnaire. The instrument was adapted from a questionnaire designed and implemented by Minger in her dissertation (149). The adaptations were implemented to strengthen reliability and to reflect the change in the topic being preached. A pretest questionnaire (see Appendix B) was mailed to the subjects two weeks prior to the beginning of the sermon series. The questionnaire served as a baseline on the subjects' responses to Christian outreach.

Following the sixth sermon in the series of twelve, a mid-test questionnaire was mailed (see Appendix B). This questionnaire included the same questions as presented in the pretest. In addition, the mid-series questionnaire measured responses to elements in the sermon style and delivery (use of conversational style, illustration, positive emotional appeal, and life application) that were used to assist in changing listeners' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to Christian outreach.

Following the conclusion of the sermon series, a final questionnaire was mailed

(see Appendix B). This post-sermon series questionnaire was identical to the mid-series questionnaire with the addition of three open-ended questions with space provided for answers. These questions gave the respondent the opportunity to answer regarding their cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to Christian outreach.

In addition to these questionnaires, a participant debriefing session and semi-structured interviews provided valuable information following the posttest measure. The interviews were conducted 4 ½ months after the last of the Christian outreach sermons with volunteers who participated in the study. I conducted the interviews for the purpose of judging the lasting impact of the sermon series on respondents' whole-person responses to Christian outreach. The researcher-adapted questionnaire served as the primary source of data collection for each of the three dependent variables (cognitive, affective, and behavioral), as well as the independent and extraneous variables.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The motivation to engage in this research came as a result of a need within St. James United Methodist Church. As pastor I observed the need for a change in responses to Christian outreach. Leaders and members of the congregation expressed their understanding of the need as well. The preaching portion of the project occurred ten months after I became the pastor of St. James.

The study was limited to the worship participants of St. James United Methodist Church. The church reported a membership of 413 and a weekly average worship attendance of 125 for the year 2003. I can generalize similar outcomes if this study is replicated in a congregation of similar size and demographic makeup.

The use of a sermon series as the independent variable may have limited the

study. Other venues and formats (lecture, workshops, small groups, etc.) may have similar outcomes, provided the teaching was done with the same scriptural basis and with the central message communicated in a manner that engages the listeners toward a whole-person response.

Overview of Dissertation

Chapter 2 of this work provides the literature review including the theological, biblical, and historical context for this study. The design of the research is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the research. Chapter 5 gives a summary and interpretation of the research findings as well as suggestions for further inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of literature considers seven major topics related to the cultivating of whole-person response to Christian outreach: theological foundation of outreach, biblical materials on outreach, historical examples of outreach, contemporary means of outreach, preaching on the subject of outreach, relevant preaching, and research methods.

Theological Foundation of Christian Outreach

The nature of the Trinity gives the basis for outreach as a part of the larger work of God and his people. Stevens reminds readers that before God created the world, ministry existed in God, and it is of God not merely for God. Ministry is not a mere human activity Christians do because of duty to or admiration for the example of Jesus, it is something that takes believers to the heart of God. The ministry of the triune God is relational, characterized by love (141). Stevens goes on to describe the work of the people of God:

The ministry of God arises from the communal life of God, the Father, Son and Spirit ministering in love to one another even before there was a world to save (John 17:24). Ministry for the people of God is not a delegated activity but derived, participatory, and perichoretic.... So identified is Jesus with his creatures that on the last day when our final examination is given in terms of relationships, he will say, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat ... a stranger and you invited me in" (Mt. 25:31-46). (143)

Within the Trinity, Jesus is the sent one. The Father sent him to the earth to put flesh on God. Jesus Christ is, as Thomas F. Torrance writes, "The outgoing of the innermost Being of God toward men in active sympathy and compassion, the boundless mercy of God at work in human existence" (718).

Jesus is also the sending one. Along with the Father, Jesus the Son sent the Holy Spirit as a counselor, another helper to his church (John 14:16). All that the Holy Spirit is and does contributes to the ultimate role of the one who empowers believers to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. Just before Jesus' ascension into heaven, he promised his disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Not only does the Father send the Son, and the Father and Son sends the Spirit, but the Father, Son, and Spirit sends the Church into the world. After his resurrection, Jesus appears in the midst of his disciples. "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21). In this passage the whole Trinity is present, each involved in reaching out to people.

The task of the Church is the same as the one Jesus completed through the incarnation—to represent God. Mission is the sending of God from first to last. Mission is God's own going forth. He is the Sent, and Sending One. As Darrell L. Guder et al. write, "This mutuality in sending ... marks the divine communion as a communion of mission, and this in turn leaves its mark on the church" (82-83).

Recovering an understanding of the missional nature of the triune God has brought an awakening among many to recapture the apostolic or missional nature of the Church. The meaning of *apostolos* in the New Testament is "the sent one." The apostle is a messenger, a delegate, and one sent forth with orders. So the Church is the *apostolos* of God. Trinitarian theology leads believers to see the Church as the instrument of God's

mission. The classic doctrine of the mission Dei as God the Father sending the Son and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit must be expanded to include the additional movement of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world.

Outreach is a part of Christian ministry and is, therefore, the task of all Christians. Stevens argues that ministry is not simply what the preacher does or something that is squeezed out of the week's schedule after all the other things are done (132). Stevens continues with a powerful statement of ministry:

Ministry is not an exceptional optional activity for the people of God but rather part of its essence. The church does not have ministry: it is ministry. But it is not mere activity, energy expended.... It is a service arising from the life in the Servant, which takes us into the life of the Father, through the Spirit (as is apparent from Mt. 25:42-44). (139)

Ministry is the highest and first calling of all believers. In Christ the people as a whole become the servant of the Lord. Baptism is the universal ordination of people into the universal ministry of the people of God: "We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body.... Now the body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Cor. 12:13-14; Stevens 38).

The theological concept of the priesthood of all believers gathers up several New Testament themes such as universal ministry, universal empowerment of the Spirit, and universal call. The concept of the priesthood of all believers also fulfills the seminal idea planted in the beginning of Israel's story that God's people would be a "kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6).

Biblical Materials on Christian Outreach

Christian Outreach finds its precedent in both Old and New Testament passages. Within the Old Testament, the covenant with Abraham and the call for hospitality serve

as forerunners for the church's current call to reach out. Within the New Testament, the example of Jesus is the best standard by which contemporary outreach can be measured, and the Great Commandment and Great Commission together form the motivation and mission of Christian outreach. Additionally, the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian outreach and outreach as Christian ministry are vital in understanding the biblical materials on outreach.

Christian Outreach in the Old Testament

Christian outreach has at least two conceptual precursors in the life of Israel, namely the covenant with Abraham and the call to welcome the stranger. The first precursor to Christian outreach found within the initial calling of Abraham is the promise that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). The covenant brought the people of Israel into a relationship with God marked by responsibility as much as privilege. As God's chosen people, the Israelites would act as mediators between God and the people on earth: "You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6).

Isaiah 49:6 reads, "He says: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Jesus picks up the light metaphor and gives it to the Church as their calling in Matthew 5:14: "You are the light of the world." Together, Genesis 12:3, Exodus 19:6, and Isaiah 49:6 are often called the great commission of the Old Testament and are quoted in part by Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:47 as the rationale for carrying the message of the gospel to the Gentiles.

The primary fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and his descendants is found in Jesus' life and ministry. As the Savior of all people, Jesus Christ fulfilled the calling of the Israelites to be light to the Gentiles. "Ultimately a single individual was envisioned, an individual who would gather up all the service expected of Israel in his own person, who would undertake a mission to Israel and through Israel to the world" (Stevens 137). So, through Jesus the Messiah, the ministry of Israel is fulfilled and passed on to the New Testament people of God, the Church.

The second precursor to Christian outreach is the call to welcome the stranger. Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to the three mysterious visitors opened the door to the revelation of God's blessing to them in the form of a son (Gen. 18:1-21). In the description of this blessing, not only would Abraham become a great nation but all nations on earth would be blessed through him.

The commands not to mistreat aliens were explained with the words, "For you were aliens in Egypt" (Exod. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33-34). The fact that the Israelites had personal experience with being strangers in a foreign land should have had a direct effect on how they treated others. God's graciousness to the Israelites in their time of alienation was an example for them to reproduce in the time when others would be alien to them.

Israel's standing as a stranger reminded the people that in public worship, Israel was the guest of the Lord. Public worship was primarily God's act, the ritual hospitality and generosity of the Lord extended to Israel as honored and cherished guests. As God is host to Israel, so Israel is called to be host to the stranger (Keifert 59-60).

Jesus and Outreach

As in every aspect of life and ministry, Jesus is the model for outreach. For the

Church's ministry to be a continuation of the ministry of Jesus, believers must employ the same characteristics that Jesus embodied in his earthly ministry. Often Christians ask God to bless their ministry instead of asking God what ministry he will bless.

Considering the principles of Jesus and implementing them will go a long way in letting the ministry the church does be truly the ministry of Jesus Christ. Thomas Oden declares, "If ministry cannot be clearly established as the continuation of Jesus' own intention and practice, we lose its central theological premise" (59-60). Jesus prayed to the Father, "As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). An analogy begins to unfold between incarnation and apostolicity, between God's engagement in the world in Christ and believers' engagement in the world as ambassadors for Christ.

Oden continues by noting that everywhere Jesus was remembered as one who left his disciples with an unmistakably clear commission. Christian ministry still serves under that commission. The closing sentences of Matthew's Gospel state the authorization to ministry unequivocally: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20). The divine command and the reliance upon Christ's presence together compose the ground floor of pastoral theology and the practice of ministry (Oden 62).

The work of Jesus became the work of Jesus' disciples. The book of Acts is testimony to the fact that Jesus' followers did indeed continue his work. That apostolic work still belongs to the Church two thousand years later (Guder et al. 133).

The character of Jesus' outreach to people was incarnational, compassionate, need

meeting, Father led, formational, hospitable, and sacrificial. These characteristics represent a distillation of the intentions and practices of Jesus Christ as they relate to outreach. These same principles are fundamental to the outreach of the Church as a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Incarnational. Jesus laid down his divinity and became human. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). The incarnation required humility beyond human understanding. In giving Christians an example of humility, Paul tries to describe the emptying that Jesus willingly underwent to live among humans:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. (Phil. 2:5-8)

As Robert Lewis says, in the midst of humanity’s meaningless poverty entered “the gospel of Jesus Christ, ... the living proof of God” (42). In a way, the contextualization of God is found in Jesus Christ. God put himself into human context. In the discussion and practice of contextualization, Christians simply continue the incarnation of Jesus. Darrell L. Whiteman suggests that in the same way that Jesus emptied himself and dwelt among humans with the goal of reaching them, believers must be willing to follow Jesus’ example (6). This principle of contextualization shows that to reach out authentically, Christians must go and become *one of* and *one with* people whom they hope to reach.

In his book, John Zizioulas moves the discussion into the realm of ministry:

The relational character of the ministry implies that the only acceptable method of mission of the Church is the *incarnational* [original emphasis] one: The Church relates to the world through and in her ministry by being involved existentially in the world. The nature of mission is not found in

the Church's *addressing* [original emphasis] the world but in being fully in *com-passion* [original emphasis] with it. (224)

Compassionate. Jesus' outreach was motivated by love. Everything Jesus did, from the incarnation to healing, feeding, teaching, suffering, and dying, flowed from the deep love he has for the Father and for people. "But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (John. 14:31). Jesus' compassion is seen in what he did, but even more in how he felt. Behind the curing acts of Jesus the reader must understand his caring heart. Jesus participated in the pain, suffering, and brokenness of humanity out of the depths of his loving heart (Nouwen 31-32).

Jesus is often described as being filled with compassion for the people that were around him (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark. 1:41; 6:34; 8:2). William Barclay explains that the Greek word for compassion is *spagchnizesthai*, and it means to be moved with compassion. Aside from three occurrences in parables, it is exclusively used of Jesus. Jesus was moved by the spiritual lostness of the crowd, by the hunger and the pain of men, and by the sorrow of others (New Testament Words 277-78).

Another significant insight Barclay gives is that the New Testament word for compassion would never have been used of someone divine in the pagan religions of the ancient Near East. According to the ancient Greek thinkers, the highest and essential characteristic of divinity was *apatheia*, incapable of feeling. The Greeks reasoned that if God could feel sorrow or joy at anything that happened to humans, it would mean humans can affect God, have power over God, which was illogical to them (New Testament Words 278-79). The fact that Jesus was continually moved with compassion makes him a different kind of God. Barclay places the compassion of Jesus in the context

of knowing God's nature:

We think it a commonplace that God is love, and that the Christian life is love. We would do well to remember that we would never have known that without the revelation of Jesus Christ, of whom it is so often and so amazingly said that he was moved with compassion. (280)

Each time the compassion of Jesus is described, that compassion is so powerful that it never fails to move him to do something. He prayed, taught, healed, and fed—all from the motivation of deep compassion.

The compassion of Jesus moved him to urge his disciples to pray and act on behalf of the multitudes of people who were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. After going from town to town preaching, teaching, and healing, Jesus goes to his disciples and charges them, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matt. 9:37). Not only did Jesus’ compassion move him to respond, but motivated by the great need, Jesus urged his disciples to pray for God to raise up people who will work among those who need the love and care of God. All that Jesus did, and called his disciples to do was provoked by love.

The Christian outreach of the Church must also be motivated by love. If the people of God are not prompted by love for God and love for people made in God’s image, then Christians will never be effective in their efforts to reach out to their community. Matthew 22:37-39 gives Jesus’ summary of all the law and the prophets of the Old Testament: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love for God and love for neighbor must be the impetus for all Christians do in outreach.

Need meeting. Though Jesus' ministry was not dictated by the needs of people, his ministry did address those needs. He was not captive to any and all requests, but Jesus took seriously his calling to meet the needs of those around him. Jesus fed the multitude (Matt. 14:13-21), healed many diseases (Matt. 4:23-24), drove out demons (Matt. 8:28-34), even raised people from the dead (John 11:38-44). Based in his compassion, moved to be involved, Jesus engaged in need-meeting ministry. Jesus addressed the real-life needs of people while seeking to draw them into the kingdom of God where their internal need for fellowship with God could be met.

Following Jesus' need-meeting example requires that the disciple know needs of the people he or she hopes to reach. Incarnational Christians are better able to identify others' needs, both felt and unfelt. Once these needs are identified, believers should find ways to fill those needs. Lesslie Newbigin confirms the community that Jesus intended his Church to be, among other things—a need-meeting community:

It [the church] will be a community that does not live for itself but is deeply involved in the concerns of its neighborhood. It will be the church for the specific place where it lives, not the church for those who wish to be members of it—or, rather it will be for them insofar as they are willing to be *for* [original emphasis] the wider community. (229)

Rick Richardson agrees that beginning with the felt needs of people is not only consistent with Jesus' own ministry, but if churches do not start with the needs of the people, they will not have anyone to talk to about the gospel (86).

Father led. Jesus' ministry of outreach was guided by the master plan of the Father. In answering the Jews who were persecuting Jesus for the work he did on the Sabbath, Jesus clearly shows that his ministry was Father led:

My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.... I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can

do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. (John 5:17, 19, 30)

Jesus did not develop a strategy or cast a vision. Jesus simply sought the will of the Father for his ministry. Jesus was sent to follow the Father's plan, to the letter (Blackaby and King 26). Any ideas of ministry, any ideas of outreach came from his Father.

For outreach to be Christian, it must be rooted in the work of Christ. If Christ only did what he saw his father doing, then Christians are bound to that same standard. In Jesus' model prayer, Jesus instructed his disciples to pray: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Jesus' ministry was identified with the work of God. Jesus' ministry was based on obedience and complete submission to the will of God. The obedience of Jesus was not based on submission to power but submission to love. The unity between Jesus and God is a unity of love (Barclay, "The Gospel of John, Vol 1." 188). For Jesus, doing God's will was more important than physical food (see John 4:34).

Henry Blackaby and Claude King highlight the importance of Jesus' ministry being Father led in his popular work Experiencing God:

God is always at work in His world. He is working to bring about world redemption through His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus described the way He knew and did the will of His Father. Because the Father loved His Son, He showed the Son what He was doing. Jesus watched to see where the Father was working and joined Him. You can follow that same pattern by watching to see where God is at work. When He shows you, join Him in His work. (77-78)

Formational. Along with meeting felt and unfelt needs, Jesus also preached and taught the truth about God's kingdom (Matt. 4:23). The preaching and teaching ministry of Jesus was meeting the need of the mind for the knowledge of the kingdom of God.

Jesus did not simply bring new information, but he brought an invitation to a new reality that transforms those who accept it.

The Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7 gives Jesus' official, authoritative teaching regarding the values of the kingdom of God. These words describe a kingdom based not on the external codes of conduct but on the internal reality of a transformed heart. The essence of Jesus' message was a new relationship with God based on grace not on law. This new relationship would show itself in a righteousness that exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (see Matt. 5:20).

Over and over in the New Testament, the formative knowledge of Jesus' saving grace changed lives. Instructed by an angel, Philip traveled the desert road south and there met an Ethiopian eunuch who was the treasurer for Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. In the interaction that follows, Philip explained the good news of Jesus, starting with the very place the man was reading. The formative outreach of Philip, guided by the Holy Spirit, changed the man's life. As a result the eunuch requested baptism as they traveled (see Acts 8:26-39).

The formative outreach of Peter in the home of Cornelius the Gentile was accompanied by the presence of the Holy Spirit who transformed the lives of Cornelius' family and friends (see Acts 10:23-48).

To be effective in outreach, the Church must present the truth of the kingdom of God in a formative way. Christians must communicate so that the ultimate truth of God goes beyond mere information and draws people into the new veracity of the kingdom of God.

Hospitable. Throughout Jesus' life, he embodied the Old Testament expectation

of welcoming the stranger. In his words and actions, Jesus communicated a warmth and openness to people who were typically shunned or ignored by the religious people of the day. Jesus crossed barriers to make people feel welcome. Michael Slaughter speaks of the four major barriers that Jesus crossed on his way to reaching out to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-26): gender, race, geography, and theology.

John Koenig argues that the themes of abundance and hospitality, which are major characteristics of Jesus' life and ministry, are best seen in the scriptural image of a feast. Jesus was calling people to a change of mind and heart in keeping with the coming of God's realm. Patrick Kiefert explains that the abundance of God was "offered in Jesus' ministry through the central metaphor of a banquet" (26). In Luke's descriptions of Jesus at banquets, Jesus always enters the scene as one who needs hospitality. As the event progresses, the role of guest and host, stranger and known, are reversed (67). Jesus becomes the host, offering hospitality to the former hosts turned guests.

One great example of Jesus' switch from stranger to host is the scene at the road to Emmaus, detailed in Luke 24:13-35. Jesus as a stranger joins two of his disciples who are talking about the crucifixion and reported resurrection. The stranger appears to be the only person in Jerusalem who has not heard of the events. As the trio walks, the stranger begins to unfold for them the law and the prophets and shows them the connections with Jesus' fate and ministry. The group reached the home of one of the disciples. The stranger begins to walk on, but the disciples offer him their hospitality, which he accepts. The three sit and Jesus takes the bread and blesses it. In this act the disciples' eyes were opened, and they knew the Lord was in their midst.

Matthew's portrayal of the last judgment is set in the context of hospitality to "the

least of these” (Matt. 25:40; 45). Those who will be judged with eternal punishment are those who fail to give food, drink, clothing, and compassion.

Koenig suggests that welcoming the stranger is a major theme of Paul’s understanding of the Church (52-84). Romans 15:7 speaks of Christians welcoming each other in love: “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” In continuing the hospitality of Jesus, Christians are called to move past barriers to love those who do not know that God loves them. Hospitality is more than simply making someone feel at home; it is a whole lifestyle of gracious acceptance.

The outreach of the Church must communicate an honest desire to accept others, to consider the comfort of others, and to move past barriers to love. Christians must remember their own experience of being alienated from God. Paul reminds his readers that salvation in Jesus Christ brought a settlement between God and God’s enemies:

For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. (Rom. 5:10-11)

The active remembrance of believers’ previous separation from God is a powerful motivator in moving the Church into an active hospitality. A welcoming congregation should draw people into a closer relationship with God.

Sacrificial. From the moment of the incarnation through the time of his execution, Jesus gave of himself out of love for God on behalf of people. Sacrifice is at the heart of the work Jesus came to accomplish. Speaking of the fulfilled nature of the Old Testament sacrificial system, the writer of Hebrews declares, “He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of

the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:9-10). Jesus’ earthly ministry was a sacrificial ministry from first to last.

Though the sacrifices of Christians can never save a person, these actions can help people begin “to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (Eph. 3:18). The sacrifice of money, time, talent, and energy can make all the difference in bringing someone to Jesus Christ. Believers must also be willing to sacrifice their popularity, pride, prejudices, and material comforts. The imperfect sacrifices of believers can communicate God’s love even in absence of words. Colin Gunton rightly places the sacrifices of the believer into the context of God’s self-sacrifice:

All truly human action in relation to other people and the world, are finite echoes, achieved through the Father’s gift of himself in the Son and the Spirit, of the giving and receiving that Father, Son and Spirit are in eternity. (174-75)

Though the sacrifices of believers do not contain the power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, these sacrifices can point a person to the sacrifice of Christ.

If the Church’s ministry is to be a continuation of the ministry of Christ, it will involve sacrifice. John R. W. Stott in The Cross of Christ writes of his concern over the fact that “the place of suffering in service and passion in mission is hardly ever taught today” (322). Understanding that sacrifice is a part of the Church’s collective call to be involved in God’s mission is one of the keys to successful Christian outreach.

The Great Commandment and the Great Commission

The practice of Christian outreach is a living expression of the great commandment:

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

The second is this; Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)

A believer’s response to Christian outreach must flow out of love for God and love for others. The Great Commandment gives believers the motivation for all ministry.

Participation in mission is participation in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is the fountain of sending love (Bosch 390).

Motivated by love for God and love for neighbor, the Church can be involved in the mission to reach the world with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus commanded his disciples with the task of reaching out:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matt. 28:17-20)

Theologically speaking, mission is not a human activity undertaken out of obligation to the great commission, or even simple gratitude. It is God’s own mission in which Christians have been included (Stevens 197). As a missional Church, Guder et al. suggest that, among other things, the Church is God’s called and sent people. This missional understanding should be practical, that is it should be put into practice (12). Going and making disciples is the essence of the Church put into action. Indeed, David Bosch shows that discipleship to Jesus involves witness (56-83).

The Holy Spirit and Outreach

Outreach as a part of Christian ministry is closely connected to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts, many different people were described as being filled, full, or anointed with the Spirit including Jesus (Acts 10:38), the 120 (Acts 2:4), Peter (4:8), Stephen (6:3, 5; 7:55), Paul (9:17; 13:9), and Barnabas (11:24).

The early Church was able to have a powerful impact on the lives of people and the world simply because the believers were filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the indispensable ingredient for ministry. Before the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, the Church was a fearful group, unsure of their future. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, the believers became bold witnesses. F. F. Bruce speaks of God's power given to the disciples in his work on the Book of Acts:

[The disciples] would be vested with heavenly power—that power by which, in the event, their mighty works were accomplished and their preaching made effective. As Jesus Himself had been anointed at His baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so His followers were now to be similarly anointed and enabled to carry on His work. (36)

The Holy Spirit comes, giving the Church not only the character of Jesus but the ministry of Jesus along with the ability to carry out that ministry.

Jesus' promise makes clear the purpose of the Holy Spirit's ministry: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The ability to be witnesses, to be ones who reach out to others, only comes when the Holy Spirit comes. Believers thinking that they can do ministry on their own often hinders the Holy Spirit from empowering ministry. The Church must rethink ministry. Ministry is not as much the imitation of Christ but the impartation of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Outreach as Christian Ministry

Christian outreach is a part of Christian ministry and is, therefore, the task of all Christians. Ministry is not just what the preacher does or something that is squeezed out of the week's schedule after all the other things are done (Stevens 132). Ministry is the

highest and first calling of all believers. Later, Stevens comments on ministry as every believer's task:

And in Christ the people as a whole become the servant of the Lord. Baptism is the universal ordination of people into the universal ministry of the people of God: "we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body.... Now the body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Cor. 12:13-14). (138)

The concept of the priesthood of all believers gathers up several New Testament themes such as universal ministry, universal empowerment of the Spirit, and universal call. This concept also fulfills the seminal idea planted in the beginning of Israel's story that God's people would be a "kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6). As the New Testament people of God, the Church is heir to the same calling:

Ministry is not an exceptional optional activity for the people of God but rather part of its essence. The church does not have ministry: it is ministry. But it is not mere activity, energy expended.... It is a service arising from the life in the Servant, which takes us into the life of the Father, through the Spirit (as is apparent from Mt. 25:42-44). (Stevens 139)

Ministry to people is ministry to Jesus. Ministry is defined by who is served rather than the shape and location of the deeds done. Ministry is service to God on behalf of God in the Church and the world. Ministers are people who put themselves at the disposal of God for the benefit of others and God's world (Stevens 133).

The Greek word for ministry (*diadonia*) is simply the word for "service." Emphasizing the derivative nature of service, Paul chooses the Greek word for slave/servant (*doulos*) to describe his own role (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Col. 4:12). Paul's point was that Christian servants are first and finally servants of God, not of people, and servants of people because they are servants of God. The motivation of a Christian's service should be love. Servants of God are amateurs, serving because they are being

loved and are in love (Stevens 143). The servants of God choose to be slaves because of the love they have for God and the deep love God has for them.

Historical Examples of Christian Outreach

A review of church history suggests several salient movements engaged in effective outreach. This study reviews the early apostolic movement, the Celtic movement, and the Methodist movement.

The Early Apostolic Movement

Loren B. Mead describes the two paradigms that governed the Church from the first century until recent times. In the first and second centuries, the Church operated from an apostolic paradigm. In this time, the early Church struggled to gain a distinct identity from Judaism. At the same time, the Church also tried to relate to, yet remain differentiated from, the Greco-Roman world in which it was spreading. The Church was to be a “peculiar people” as Peter says, but the peculiarity had much to do with caring for and serving the world for God (8-9).

After the conversion of Constantine, the Church transitioned from the early apostolic paradigm to a more established, Christendom paradigm. The Christian faith enjoyed a new status as the accepted religion of Rome. While seemingly a positive development, this new paradigm effectively quelled the missional passion of the early Church. Since Christianity became accepted and endorsed by the government of Rome, it no longer needed to reach out into the world but expected the world to reach out to the Church.

The Church must regain the apostolic paradigm to meet the demands of an age in which it no longer enjoys a privileged place. The Church today needs to be apostolic in

two ways. First, it must be built on the witness and faith of the apostles now contained in Scripture. Second, the Church must be the result of and the means of God's further sending into the world. Unfortunately, As Guder et al. remind readers, when Christianity became Christendom, "[a]postolicity no longer described the action of the people of God in missional engagement. Instead it [apostolicity] meant the succession in priestly authority" (192). Stevens reveals the wrong headedness of this changed paradigm: "[T]he Church is not the sending agency; it is the sent agency" (197). In the ashes of the longstanding Christendom paradigm, many believe a new apostolic age must and will emerge. When this new paradigm does appear, it will emerge from a renewed sense of the Church's mission (Mead 9).

The Celtic Christian Movement

In the tradition of the old apostolic age, Patrick launched an apostolic movement in Ireland in the fifth century. This Celtic evangelism included the use of many teams, each with a dozen or more men and women who would camp near the people they were seeking to reach. This apostolic band would form into a community of faith adjacent to the tribal settlement. The group would engage the people in conversation and ministry and look for those who were receptive. They welcomed responsive people into their group fellowship and worship (Hunter, Celtic Way 21-22).

The significance of the work of Patrick's Celtic bands was that by living and loving, newcomers would find that they believed what the Christians believed and would commit their lives to Christ. Christianity is truly more caught than taught (Hunter, Celtic Way 52-54). In the midst of relationships with believers, these persons come to believe the claims of the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This model of

belonging before believing is foundational in understanding not only the apostolic ministry of the first century but the success of Patrick's ministry to Ireland. More and more converts out of secularity report that their assimilation into the community of faith preceded their commitment or their discovery of faith (Church for the Unchurched 166).

The similarities between the Celtic "barbarians" of the fifth century and the unbelieving "new barbarians" of the twenty-first century are striking. Many assume today's secular, uncivilized, postmodern people are unreachable (Hunter, Celtic Way 96-97). To this assumption, Hunter makes explicit the link between apostolic hospitality and ministry to these new barbarians:

If we pay the price to understand the unchurched around us, we will usually know what to say and what to do; if they know and feel we understand them, by the tens of millions they will risk opening their hearts to the God who understands them. (121)

The Methodist Movement

In his book Robert E. Coleman tells of the great explosion that occurred in the infancy of the Methodist movement. Within one generation the American Methodist movement grew from a few thousand adherents to become the largest denomination in the land. It surpassed its nearest rival, the Baptist, by 20 percent and numbered as many members as all Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians combined. About fifty years from the time the first Methodist set foot on the shores of America, more than one-quarter of all professing Christians belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church (18-19).

Historians continue to speculate as to the reasons for the amazing growth of the Methodist movement. Coleman suggests some of the factors that were involved in the growth are the missionary vision, fluid structure, rapid deployment of manpower,

administrative efficiency, methodical discipline, heartfelt worship, and above all, the Wesleyan way of life and outreach, which was based in a simple faith in the gospel of salvation (19-20). John Wesley gave his preachers a powerful charge:

You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they can see the Lord. (310)

Hunter, in his book To Spread the Power, suggests that Church growth people of late have largely rediscovered what Christian history's greatest apostolic leaders knew and practiced (39-40). John Wesley is one of those strategists whose wisdom can illuminate the work in outreach.

One of the keys to the success of the Methodist movement was Wesley's pragmatic approach to evangelism. The supreme standard for evaluating any evangelistic approach was its outcome. Wesley wanted to know if the approach helped to achieve the perennial apostolic objectives of discipline of people and the growth of the true Church. Wesley himself disliked the open-air preaching for which he was famous and from which he reaped such wonderful results. The only reason he continued to preach in the fields and streets was that it worked (Hunter, To Spread the Power 43).

United Methodist Christians can gain great encouragement from their Wesleyan heritage. The precedent of relevant, active outreach is clearly foundational in the history of the United Methodist Church. Unfortunately, Methodists today are much more likely to regard their parish as their world than the world as their parish (Hunter, Church for the Unchurched 123). Methodist believers must recapture the essence of the early

Methodists' passion for evangelism through outreach if they are to see their congregations and their denomination grow again. Like Wesley, United Methodists should take a pragmatic approach to evangelism that employs means that work.

Means of Christian Outreach

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament reveal the believer's call and obligation to be involved in Christian outreach. The literature is rich with suggested ways a congregation can be involved in Christian outreach. Apart from traditional evangelism, four major types or means of Christian outreach will be reviewed: pre-evangelistic service, lifestyle evangelism, worship evangelism, and multiple units. Considering the multitude of options available, congregations should begin their outreach ministry practically.

Pre-Evangelistic Service

Christian outreach in the mode of service is not only biblical but a highly effective means to reach unchurched people. Service in a community is one of the best and easiest ways to begin to reach out. Sjogren suggests the use of simple acts of loving service that express God's love in tangible ways. Servant evangelism is "demonstrating the kindness of God by offering to do some act of humble service with no strings attached" (18). Sjogren believes that when people can feel God's presence and see that he is real, something deep inside them is touched. He also stresses the importance of refusing payment because free service offers a picture of the grace of God, a priceless gift that can never be repaid (19-20). The service that believers offer is motivated by love for God and love for others rather than by what the individual or the congregation gains by reaching out.

Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin advocate several evangelistic approaches. One of these approaches is a kind of need-meeting ministry they call “presence evangelism.” These ministries help a church be involved in the community. Christians must not allow themselves the luxury of indifference. What happens in the world must matter to God’s people because the people in the world matter to God. Congregations should search for opportunities to create practical, presence ministries that make an impact on the openness of people to the gospel. These ministries might include divorce recovery, single parenting, substance abuse, and child care. Presence evangelism is the large open end of the funnel where unchurched people are initially contacted through need-meeting ministries so that they may sense the warmth and acceptance of Christianity (22-25).

Lifestyle Evangelism

In his book Growing Your Church from the Outside In, Barna shows how the most effective method of advertising for the unchurched is a personal invitation from a friend. Two-thirds of unchurched people surveyed said that such an overture would have a positive effect on them (116).

Christian A. Schwarz notes that Christians in both growing and declining churches have exactly the same number of contacts with non-Christians (an average of 8.5 contacts). This number of contacts with non-Christians is large enough that no need to emphasize developing new relationships with the unchurched exists. The challenge is to find ways of using already existing relationships as contacts for evangelism (35).

Five insights can be drawn from the story of how the first three disciples came to follow Jesus (see John 1:19-51), according to Hunter. The first insight is that the faith began to spread when the faith’s ambassadors penetrated the people’s community and

common life. Jesus did not wait in the synagogue for people to take the initiative to come to him. Rather, Jesus was present, available, and making contacts in the city marketplace, where the people engaged in conversation and looked for life (Radical Outreach 176).

The second insight is that faith spreads person to person along the lines of social networks. Christian faith spreads relationally between people who know and trust one another and across kinship and friendship networks. John 1 reports the faith spreading between friends as John the Baptizer reports to Andrew and his other friend that Jesus is the promised Lamb of God and Andrew finds his brother Simon and relays the message, “We have found the Messiah” (v. 41; Hunter, Radical Outreach 177).

The third insight is that the ministry of hospitality fosters the people’s discovery of faith. The Scripture tells of Andrew and his friend spending the afternoon with Jesus where he was staying. Welcoming people into the community of faith must follow believers’ penetration into people’s world. The early apostolic Church along with the Celtic and Methodist movements all practiced Christian hospitality as an important component of their effective outreach (Hunter, Radical Outreach 178).

The fourth insight is that the faith spreads, person to person, through the ministry of conversation. As the two friends spend the afternoon with Jesus, undoubtedly they bring questions to the conversation. What they experienced with Jesus was not the brief one-way presentation that so many models of evangelism presuppose, but honest, open-ended, two-way dialogue. Jesus used this method quite often, as with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-26; Hunter, Radical Outreach 178-79).

The fifth insight from the story of the early disciples is that people respond more

to invitations than to ultimatums, often to multiple invitations because becoming a Christian is a process that takes time. Jesus' answer to Andrew's question, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" was more of an invitation than an answer: "Come and see" (John 1:38-39; Hunter, Radical Outreach 179).

One of the keys to effective use of lifestyle evangelism is that the one who reaches out lives a life of integrity. A contagious Christian life will display the elements of authenticity in identity, emotional life, personal confession, and conviction (Hybels 58-63).

An honest assessment of the costs of such contagious Christianity yields a substantial list of expenses: time and energy, reading and study, money, risk of embarrassment, rejection, or persecution, and life complication. Even with this impressive list, the eternal dividends of people coming to Christ far outweigh the investment costs (Hybels 36-38).

Worship Evangelism

Another viable means of Christian outreach is worship evangelism. Sally Morgenthaler notes that throughout the Old and New Testaments, worship is clearly the most important thing God's people can do. The first commandment God issued to the children of Israel centered on worship: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me" (Deut. 5:6-7). The fourth commandment was related to worship as well: "Observe the Sabbath day keeping it holy" (Deut. 5:12). In the New Testament, Jesus prioritized worship in answering a Sadducee's question about which commandment was the most important: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your

mind and with all your strength” (Mark. 12:30). Not only is worship primary for the individual believer but for the church as a whole (38).

The primacy of worship seems to conflict with what many evangelical believers have been taught. Evangelism usually tops the list of most church’s mission statements. Nevertheless, in John 4:23, Jesus did not say that God is seeking evangelists, but worshipers. The true goal of evangelism is to produce more and better worshipers (Morgenthaler 39).

True worship is attractive to non-Christians. Jack Hayford describes his conviction about evangelism and worship:

I am totally persuaded that worship is the key to evangelism as well as to the edification of the Church.... I contend that, as long as worship is focused on protecting God from unworthy participants, it can never serve His purpose as a resource for incomplete and broken mankind to find completion and wholeness in His Presence. (56)

Worship evangelism makes Christian worship accessible to unbelievers and helps them meet God in church worship. Morgenthaler believes that worship is not just for the spiritually mature; it is for the spiritually hungry (84). Some disagreement exists regarding worship evangelism. Marva J. Dawn cautions, “Good worship will be evangelistic, but that is not its primary purpose, for it is directed toward God, not toward the neighbor” (123). An important balance must be struck. Churches can fall into the trap of becoming venders of religious goods and services instead of a body of believers sent on a mission.

According to Morgenthaler, corporate worship can be truly evangelistic when the four essential elements of worship are present: nearness, knowledge, vulnerability, and interaction. With nearness, the unbeliever can begin to sense God’s presence. Knowledge

allows the seeker to know who God is through Jesus Christ. Intimacy with God through vulnerability allows the worshiper to be known by God. Interaction is participating in a relationship with God and others (97-123). If congregations can foster and improve these elements in their worship experience and bring unbelievers to the worship service, effective evangelism can result.

Multiple Units of the Church

Since secular people are interested in getting in on the start of something new instead of joining an established group, multiple units can be an effective means of Christian outreach. New classes, groups, choirs, and even congregations can draw more secular people than will old units bound with cliques and fixed agendas (Hunter, How to Reach Secular People 68). Rick Warren is an advocate for multiple units. He suggests starting new congregations to reach new target groups in the community. Also, the church can add additional worship services with different worship styles in order to reach people who are not being reached by the current style of worship service. Another approach would be to begin a mission, which would eventually become a self-supporting congregation (180). Because American society is full of multiple choices, reaching people for Christ requires offering choices regarding worship styles, programs, and even locations. Warren calls this strategy of multiple hooks to “fish” for men and women “trotline” evangelism (200-01).

Practical Beginnings

Churches may have difficulty sorting through all of the available outreach approaches to find the one that best fits their congregation and community. According to Barna, an important key to turning churches from decline to growth is that pastors

intentionally define the types of outreach the church will emphasize. In many declining churches, outreach is perceived to be of value philosophically and psychologically, but in these congregations, ministry is more of a theoretical construct than a practical reality. For outreach to be effective, congregational leaders must institute a simple plan for specific forms of outreach. Rather than turning church members loose, structure, purpose, and guidelines should be applied to the ministries the church sanctions and supports. The people's energy for ministry must be channeled into specific directions, and resources must be allocated with care and precision (Turnaround Churches 48-49).

Preaching on the Subject of Christian Outreach

The proclamation of Christian outreach cannot stand outside the long tradition and foundation of preaching in the life of the community of believers. Preachers are called to preach the whole council of God's word to the people under their charge. The biblical and theological foundations of Christian outreach require faithful preachers to proclaim God's word regarding Christian outreach.

The study assumes that Christian outreach should be preached as an important part of a believer's life. Christian outreach must take its place among other important topics for preachers to address with their congregations.

One of Hunter's ten pioneering principles of outreach in apostolic churches is that they clarify the goal of outreach. These apostolic congregations clearly present their goal as communication of the gospel not simply to persuade people to believe, accept Christ's benefits, and join the ranks of nominal Christians. Instead, churches that are apostolic are encouraging their own members to be on a mission with God to reach nominal Christians and pagans alike (Church for the Unchurched 153-54). These same congregations

consider outreach as a lay ministry. While traditional congregations assign outreach to the pastor, truly apostolic churches assign it to a prepared apostolic laity (156). This apostolic approach to ministry presumes that laypeople will be trained for Christian outreach (157).

Clearly change is needed in regard to Church members' response to Christian outreach. In the nature of the triune God, Christians can begin to understand the nature of outreach, based in mutual love. In the sending of the Church, Christians find their primary task to "[g]o and make disciples" (Matt. 28:19). The example of Jesus gives the Church the principles of outreach that should be implemented. In the pages of history we find the principles of outreach transforming lives and guiding movements of God. Still, very few congregations are really effectively reaching out. This study suggests that the single most effective way of facilitating the necessary change is through preaching.

The Primacy of Preaching

Since Christianity is a religion based on the Bible, the teaching and preaching of the Bible is vital. Stott declares that "preaching is indispensable to Christianity" (Between Two Worlds 15). Quoting Martin Luther, Stott writes that the preaching and teaching of God's word is "the most important part of divine service and the highest and only duty and obligation of every bishop, pastor, and preacher" (24). As R. Albert Mohler, Jr. suggests, Christians must affirm with Luther that the preaching of the Word is the first essential mark of the Church. Believing in the centrality of preaching, he writes, "Now, wherever you hear or see this word preached, believed, professed, and lived, do not doubt that the true *ecclesia sancta catholica*, a Christian holy people must be there" (6).

Biblically and practically preaching is the most effective way to bring about the needed change in the responses of church members to Christian outreach. Biblically, preaching is the most powerful means of change for church members because it is the means by which God himself chose to act. “Preaching ‘works’ because this God intends to speak, to make contact with a beloved, still being redeemed creation” (Willimon 144). In a lecture given at Asbury Theological Seminary, Stewart Briscoe remarked, “Preaching is a divinely ordained happening.”

The prophets of Israel were keenly aware that the word they preached was not their own. God communicated his word to them; he put his words in their mouth (Jer. 1:9). Words from 2 Peter confirmed that the prophets spoke God’s word:

You must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (1:20, 21)

Practically, preaching is the most available means of change for church members because, generally, the largest gathering of church members is found in principle worship services where the preaching of the word of God has a major role. The preaching event has the greatest opportunity to effect positive change in the congregation because a greater percentage of the people will be present.

In spite of the negative talk some have advanced concerning preaching and preachers, no one who takes the Bible seriously should count preaching out. For the New Testament writers, preaching stood as the event through which God worked (Robinson, Biblical Preaching 19). Whereas classical thought encouraged speakers to be most concerned with the disposition of the listeners, Christian speaking is first concerned with the disposition of the biblical text and its power, before it troubles itself with the desires

and deficiencies of those who hear or refuse to hear (Willimon 144-45).

When faced with ministry needs in the growing Jerusalem Church of the first century, the apostles chose preaching over the other important alternatives into which they could have invested their time and energy. “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables” (Acts 6:2). The apostles were not devaluing the need-meeting ministry about to emerge in response to the growing concern. Instead, their decision represented the primacy of preaching for those called to do so. Others were called to the work of distribution of food (Acts 6:3-6) while the apostles gave their attention to prayer and preaching (6:4).

Preach the Word

Paul writes these important words to Timothy regarding preaching:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word, be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Tim. 4:1-2)

The charge given to Timothy is also for all who, like Timothy, have received the call to preach. The task of preaching is to be understood as of primary importance. Paul gives the charge in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who alone is the judge of the all, including the preacher. Paul sets this call to preach into the backdrop of the appearance of Jesus Christ and the coming of his kingdom.

Paul insists the preacher be ready in any situation to speak the needed word. The picture is of a soldier staying at his post, always on duty (Rogers and Rogers 506). The convenience of the time to speak is not an issue to the one called to preach. The situation may call for a word of correction (conviction of sin), rebuke (sharp censure), or

encouragement (urging). The words of correction, rebuke, or encouragement are to be preached with patience and care.

The call to preach in 1 Timothy 4:1-2 comes right after the well-known passage on the inspiration of Scripture in 3:16: “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” The call to preach is strongly linked with the inspired nature of Scripture (Greidanus 1). The first-century preachers, like the prophets before, had authority only as they spoke God’s word. No doubt preachers are called to speak God’s Word not words of their own making. Preaching is not a response to human urgings but a response to the demands of God’s eternal will (Bartow 136). Too often, the tendency is to focus on the human response, to make preaching more something preachers do and less something God does. Through preaching, God brings his word in an active way into a congregation to shape and form his church. Fred B. Craddock writes, “Preaching brings the Scriptures forward as a living voice in the congregation” (Preaching 27).

The preaching of Christian outreach is at the heart of this dissertation/project. The passages and topics for the sermon series flowed from the theological, biblical, and historical work presented. Careful attention was given to contextual issues within each pericope. The goal of the sermon series was to engage the members of the congregation in a way that elicited positive changes in their thinking, feeling, and acting regarding Christian outreach.

Relevant Preaching

Congruent with the Minger study, the approach to preaching in this study assumed two important principles. The first was that faithfulness in communicating the

biblical message is of ultimate importance in the significance of the sermon. The second principle was that the manner in which the preacher engages the listener greatly affects the consequences of the sermon.

Relevant communication of the Bible comes down to two things—biblical authority and audience sensitivity. When the whole Bible is allowed to provide the direction and substance of the message, the preacher achieves actual relevance. At the same time, when the Bible’s message is brought to bear on the needs and circumstances of the hearers in language they understand, the preacher achieves functional relevance (Henderson 34).

Actual Relevance

When the preacher takes biblical authority seriously in the preparation of the message, the sermon acquires authenticity that comes from God alone. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are God’s written word to humans. Only when that word is preached can the message be truly authoritative. Haddon Robinson calls this kind of preaching “expository”:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers. (Biblical Preaching 21)

In the expository sermon, the passage governs the sermon and thus gains actual relevance.

The God who speaks. Genesis chapter 1 records God’s creation of the world. This creation of the world and all that is in it came about because of the power of God’s spoken word. Generally, people think of words as merely something said, but for God,

his words are his deeds in the sense that they accomplish his purposes. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.... For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Ps. 33:6, 9; Greidanus 2). Isaiah describes the effective power of God’s word, comparing it to the rain that brings a fruitful harvest: “[S]o is my word that goes out of my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (55:11). Charles L. Bartow speaks of the powerful and independent nature of God’s Word:

[The Word of God] is *actio divina*, God’s self-performance, and, as such, it deploys language and languages, silence and sound, stillness and gesture, and—even nothing—to its own ends. It is at no one’s disposal. Instead, all persons, all things, all cultures, all systems of common life and governance, all events, all times, and all places are at its disposal. It is infinite; it is eternal. (26-27)

Not only do God’s words display his power by accomplishing his purpose, but they display his character by revealing his nature. From the beginning, God has been speaking about himself to his human creation. With each word God discloses more and more about his own nature. To Moses, he made known his name, “I Am” (Exod. 3:14). He is not an impersonal force, a convenient symbol, or a conglomerate of predicates but has a personal name by which he is to be worshiped (Childs 355). Israel experiences God’s identity and character through ongoing self-revelation preserved in the Scriptures.

God’s self-disclosure was motivated by love. Because of the love God has for his people, he wants them to know him. Without revelation initiated by God, humans could not know God. Love becomes the dynamic of God’s self-disclosure. He is not discovered by human insight but comes about of his own initiative. God’s love is not based in any need in himself, but it arose out of the fullness of the Divine Being. It is disinterested

love, concerned for the well-being of the object, in no way based on the worth of the object, according to H. Ray Dunning (195).

Speaking God's word. God's powerful and self-revelational speech is the foundation of all authoritative preaching. If preachers are to speak God's word, they must go to the Bible continually for what they are to preach. P. T. Forsyth writes, "The great reason why the preacher must return continually to the Bible is that the Bible is the greatest sermon in the world. Above every other function of it the Bible is a sermon" (6). The Bible is God's sermon; therefore, those who preach God's sermon have authority. If preachers do not remain in the authority of God's word, they may discourse, but they do not preach (29).

The Holy Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is God's word to all people. First, God spoke to the prophets, revealing himself and interpreting to them the significance of his actions in the history of Israel.

Second, God spoke supremely in his Son, his "word became flesh" (John 1:14). Through the ministry of Jesus, God speaks clearly. God speaks of his being and his love. Through Jesus, God joined humans in this "vulnerable flesh to place his Father's kiss upon our faces" (Brower). Not only did God speak in the sending of Jesus, but Jesus spoke the word of God. The Gospels record the authority inherent in the preaching of Jesus. This authority was in contrast to the lack of authority of the teachers of the law (see Matt. 7:29; Mark 1:22).

Finally, through the Holy Spirit, God bears witness regarding his written word, the Bible, and his fleshed-out word, Jesus. God makes each of these come to life for the people of God today. Stott so aptly states, "This Trinitarian statement of a speaking

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and so of a Word of God that is scriptural, incarnate and contemporary, is foundational to the Christian religion” (Between Two Worlds 15). Since the task of the preacher is to speak God’s word, with that word, the preacher has authority.

When the authority of a message comes from speaking God’s word, if that message is rejected by hearers, God is being rejected, not the preacher. Luke records Jesus’ view of negative responses to the authentic word: “He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Luke 10:16). Yet, the rejection of God’s word as spoken faithfully by the preacher can be caused by the lack of functional relevance that the preacher fails to add to the message.

Functional Relevance

Once the preacher has established actual relevance through the expository preaching of God’s word, the next consideration is to establish functional relevance by bringing that authoritative word of God to bear on the needs and circumstances of the hearers in language they can understand. Just because a concept or idea has been put into propositional statements for rational consideration does not mean people fully understand the concept or idea. “Truth principles remain opaque if they do not coincide with one’s world” (Chapell, Using Illustrations 59). The goal of establishing functional relevance is to intersect the world of the Bible with the world of the listener in a way that speaks understandably the timeless truth of God to timely issues from the life of the listener.

Several factors are involved in establishing functional relevance including sermons preached to the whole person, sermon form, aids to communication, credibility of the preacher, and consistency of message.

Preaching to the whole person. Saint Augustine was probably the first to apply the science of rhetoric to Christian communication. He defines the preacher's task as *docere, delectare, flectere*—to teach, to delight, to move (136). Persuading a person to change requires that the intellect, the emotions, and the will of the person be moved. In his book Persuasive Preaching Today, Ralph L. Lewis contends that the whole person must be the target of preaching:

Persuasion bids for both the listener's mind and will; it bids for the entire listener as a unit, as a whole. A sophisticated culture tends to magnify logical elements of life and minimize some of the emotional aspects. But thought and feeling are not antipodes; rather they cooperate. (112-13)

Practically speaking, explanations prepare the mind, illustrations prepare the heart, and applications prepare the will to obey God (Chapell, Christ-Centered Preaching 87). These relationships are not exclusive, but the analogy is helpful in understanding that different elements in a sermon speak to different aspects of the hearer.

Sermonic form. Various opinions exist regarding which sermonic form is most affective. The form a sermon takes is important to a concrete expression of the gospel because communication depends not on content alone but also on the form the message takes (Loscalzo 117). The form a sermon takes shapes the listeners' experience of the material being presented. Craddock argues that few preachers understand how influential sermon form is on the quality of the parishioner's faith. Form determines the degree of participation required of the listener. Craddock also suggests that deductive forms require less participation than inductive forms (Preaching 173-74).

Several authors suggest that instead of using only one structure, the preacher should allow the text to shape the form of a sermon, which results in a variety of structures (Achte-meier 74-90; Lischer 69; Craddock, Preaching 178; Goldingay 10).

These authors agree that the form of the sermon ought to take account not only of what the text says but how it says it. For example, preaching based on the poetry of a psalm should be structured differently than a parable from the gospels. Along with genre differences, the preacher must consider different preaching occasions and audiences in deciding what sermonic form to employ. A good way of adding functional relevance to the message is to pay close attention to the form of the biblical passage being preached and utilize a sermonic structure that corresponds to or enhances the structure of the passage.

Aids to communication. Creating communication that invites a whole-person response is greatly enhanced by the use of communication aids. These tools assist the preacher in the complex task of gaining functional relevance. The aids considered in this study can and should be used widely in the task of communication.

The task of communicating the challenging and complex message of Christian outreach can be furthered by the use of effective helps. Communication aids are identified as tools for assisting the audience in the job of listening. Minger notes that numerous communication aids are discussed in the homiletical literature. Based on their frequency in the literature and their appraised value for her study, four aids to communication were employed: the use of a conversational style, illustrations, positive emotional appeal, and life application (62-70). Considering the design similarities, Minger's communication aids were implemented as a part of this study.

Bryan Chapell describes the need of each person for communication with a combination of the "expositional components" of explanation, illustration, and application. These components are needed not simply because different kinds of people

populate the congregation but because each person is a mix of different aspects. Human minds need explanations of what the Bible says. Explanations give hearers the knowledge of the thoughts and standards of God. Human hearts need illustrations that touch emotions or fire imaginations. Illustrations help convince hearers that God is about more than cold, abstract ideas. Human wills need applications to gain conviction that leads to action. Applications relate the truth of God's word to real-life scenarios (Christ-Centered Preaching 87). Since the aim of this study was to bring about cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes through the use of a series of sermons, an understanding of communication aids is very helpful. The aids to communication considered in this study are (1) conversational style, (2) illustration, (3) positive emotional appeal, and (4) life application. Each communication aid addresses an important need for the hearer.

Conversational style in sermon delivery means that sermons are preached more like a conversation and less like a lecture. Conversational style addresses the need for hearers to feel engaged in a dialogue rather than overhearing a monologue. Robinson argues that sermons should not sound like a thesis read to a congregation; rather it should sound like lively conversation where the speaker is thinking in the act of speaking. The feeling of good preaching is that the preacher is talking to and with the hearers (Biblical Preaching 192)

As already mentioned, sermon form indicates the internal structure of the message itself; whereas style is the way a sermon is delivered to the hearer. Calvin Miller argues for extemporaneous preaching. He suggests a good ad-lib style of delivery that calls for "tight preparation and loose delivery" (Marketplace Preaching 96). He contends that relational force is increased when a less formal, friendlier approach is used (47-48) and

recommends the use of an outline rather than a full manuscript in the pulpit allowing for valuable eye contact and freedom in delivery. “Extemporaneity welds audience and communicator together” (49). David G. Buttrick agrees, speaking of the “authority of the extemporaneity” (239).

Joseph M. Webb explains that the word “extemporaneous” actually means “without time” and suggests that someone is speaking without the benefit of preparation time or without preparation. Unfortunately, whenever someone hears bad preaching without notes, often the preacher has not prepared or has not prepared well enough for the task of preaching (22). Lack of preparation is clearly not what Miller and Buttrick are suggesting. Instead, preaching without notes requires just as much preparation as preaching with notes or manuscript, but the preparation is quite different.

Preaching without notes maximizes connectedness, maximizes congregational participation, and reflects authenticity of witness (Webb 25-30). Connectedness, congregational participation, and authenticity of witness each help the speaker achieve two indispensable things, credibility and intimacy (97-98). The way credibility and intimacy can be physically enhanced is with improved posture, freedom of movement, natural gestures, fuller facial expressions, and, most importantly, eye contact (102-06).

Leith Anderson suggests that the preacher who speaks in a style not often used in everyday conversation may be perceived as insincere (209). Preaching conversationally yields greater openness from listeners to hear the message because they sense an openness and authenticity of the preacher, which in turn increases the functional relevance of the message.

Illustrations are means to connect people personally with the meaning of biblical

texts. Illustration addresses the need for hearers to see mental pictures that engage the whole person rather than hearing only propositional facts. Warren Wiersbe reminds the preacher that people think in pictures and respond with their hearts (affect) as well as their heads (cognition). While the responsibility for obedience or disobedience to God's word belongs solely on the part of the hearer, the responsibility for making the proclamation of God's truth exciting and personal rests with those who preach. "The 'hearers of the Word' can't easily become 'doers' if their 'hearing' doesn't become 'seeing'" (61). In her study of the connection between metaphors and psychological healing, Ellen Y. Siegelman argues that inner change cannot occur unless feeling (affect) and thinking (cognition) are connected. She writes, "Cognition without affect is simply an intellectualization that will not hold; affect without cognition is just a feeling-state without a home" (42). The need to connect the components of a person's response to God's word clearly exists. If preachers fail to bring cognitive, affective, and behavioral components together, the overall response to their preaching will be minimal. The key to gaining a whole-person response is balance. Illustration without exposition has little to teach, but exposition without illustration is hard to hear and even harder to obey.

As Wiersbe laments, "I fear that our 'cerebral preaching' has created a church composed of people who have big heads and small hearts" (312). Unless the head and the heart are connected, growth and change are difficult. Sallie McFague expresses the need for head and heart connection so well: "Images 'feed' concepts; concepts 'discipline' images. Images without concepts are blind; concepts without images are sterile" (26).

Craddock writes about the great power that images have in the minds and lives of people:

Images are replaced not by concepts but by other images, and that quite slowly. Long after a man's head has consented to the preacher's idea, the

old images may still hang in the heart. But not until the image is replaced is he really a changed man; until then he is a torn man, doing battle with himself and possibly making casualties of those nearby in the process. This change takes time, because the longest trip a person takes is that from head to heart. (As One without Authority 78)

The important task of conveying the deep meaning and importance of God's Word necessitates the preacher do the difficult work of creating illustrations that effectively connect with hearers (Chapell, Using Illustrations 61).

Positive emotional appeal is significant in preaching challenging topics like Christian outreach. Positive emotional appeal addresses the need for hearers to experience the topic in a confident, positive manner. Ralph L. and Gregg Lewis suggest that every sermon has emotional appeal, either negative "fear-threats" or positive "faith-promises." Emotional appeal is present whether deliberately planned or not. In Jesus' sermons, one sees that Jesus clearly understood what motivational psychology now confirms: Emotions play some part in almost every human decision, and most of the time they play the lead role (62-63). Preaching about Christian outreach can be easily perceived as negative since the topic is so closely connected with evangelism and, thus, can invoke the negative emotions associated with evangelism. For this reason, the preacher should seek a positive approach to the topic to overcome its attendant negativity.

The call for response to Christian outreach must remain strong, but that call has the best chance to bring lasting change to the whole person if it is given in an optimistic, encouraging way. Robert G. Duffett assures preachers of the importance of a positive approach, "If life change, integrity, and obedience to the imperative (both personal and social) are important, the surprising truth is that celebrating the goodness of God and the love of God for humanity is the best way to motivate people to obey God's will" (81-82).

Along with confidence, a preacher should find ways to communicate the topic in a positive manner. A valuable tool in creating positive emotional appeal is the appropriate use of humor. Humor can make a sermon more pleasant to hear and a preacher seem more believable. This believability is enhanced when the preacher is willing to laugh at himself or herself. Daniel O’Keefe writes, “Where positive effects of humor are found, they tend to most directly involve enhancement of the audience’s liking for the communicator—and thus occasionally the trustworthiness of the communicator” (140). Humor can help an audience relate to the preacher when the subject matter becomes more demanding, according to Miller (Empowered Communicator 49)

Wiersbe suggests, “The whole person must be in the pulpit, sanctified and empowered by the Spirit of God. If the preacher has a sense of humor, then it must be given to God as well” (275). Humor can help listeners better understand and even better receive the message of the Bible. “The Word of God is the arrowhead, but humor can be the feathers on the shaft that help the arrow reach its target” (276).

Eric Metaxas points out that when Christians read the Bible, they get the distinct impression that God somehow understands and approves of humor simply because humans who are created in God’s image value it so. Humor is at the core of humanity because humans are self-conscious and, therefore, able to laugh at themselves (49). Humor has restorative power as Proverbs 17:22 states: “A cheerful heart is good medicine.” Humor can be disarming, allowing communication with those people who might not otherwise be inclined to listen. It shows the speaker does not take himself or herself so seriously. Humor can be a way that people humble themselves before others so that others can feel comfortable (50). Humor is particularly helpful in preaching

challenging topics like Christian outreach where the goal is to set the congregation at ease and provide openness where the intended message can venture past any defense.

A preacher's confidence with the topic will add to the positive emotional appeal. The strength of the biblical material on Christian outreach should evoke a confidence in the message for the preacher. The topic of Christian outreach requires a preacher to call for commitment and involvement without nagging or resorting to guilt-producing measures. Many church members prefer not to be challenged. Effective preachers must not shy away from truth or truth's implications. This is true of every topic, including the believers call to reach out in Christian love. As Robinson says, "There are times when a pastor must preach truth at the expense of some sensitivities, yet we must do so with a burden in our hearts, not chips on our shoulders" (Making a Difference 127).

Life Application allows the message to connect to real life. Life application addresses the need for hearers to connect the message to real life. All preaching involves a "so what?" A sermon should touch life, and demand realistic application. Application helps people take the message into the week to come. Application to life gives people an idea of what they are supposed to do with the sermon.

Robinson reminds preachers that application without basic knowledge of a passage is useless. A person needs explanation before they need application; however, in most cases, preachers go too far with explanation and not far enough with application. Making principles come to life requires preachers to give specific, real-life examples (Making a Difference 88-90).

Explanation of biblical truth should be tailored to the specific people to whom preachers are speaking. Application gives a concrete picture of what acting upon the

information and inspiration of the sermon looks like. Application encompasses the three dimensions of response (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) and fleshes them out in real life.

The issue of application is of critical importance in the preaching of Christian outreach. While most Christians will give mental assent, and even emotional assent to the need for church members to reach out into their community, few will actually become involved in effective Christian outreach without helpful, focused application accompanying the biblical messages. Robinson notes the importance of application:

Although some people stumble over biblical truth because they ask the question *why* [original emphasis], far more fail to apply biblical truth to their lives because they cannot answer the question *how* [original emphasis]. Ask yourself this question: If people in my congregation took this idea seriously, how would it work in next week's world? (Biblical Preaching 179)

Preaching will more likely be incorporated into people's real lives when preachers present practical suggestions about how to implement the biblical principle.

Credibility of the preacher. Perhaps one of the most influential aspects of functional relevance has to do with the credibility of the preacher. The first of Aristotle's three modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word is the personal character of the speaker. Not only does Aristotle rank the personal character of the speaker above the audience's frame of mind and the proof provided by the words themselves but he states, "[There is] persuasion through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way to make the speaker worthy of credence.... [C]haracter is almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion" (38).

Chapell makes the connection between the impact of the message and the transparent quality of the messenger's character:

True character cannot be hidden, although it can be temporarily masked. Character oozes out of us in our messages. Just as people reveal themselves to us in conversation by their words and mannerisms, we constantly reveal ourselves to others in our preaching. Over time our word choices, topics, examples, and tone unveil our hearts regardless of how well we think we have cordoned off deeper truths from public display. The inside is always on view. (Christ-Centered Preaching 28)

In the case of the preacher-congregation relationship, the revelation of character is even more clearly seen in the preacher's life. If daily life is integrated with and corresponds to the words he or she speaks from the pulpit, then integrity is gained. Ultimately, the preacher and the message cannot be separated. Even if the sermon has actual relevance (authority), it will fall short of its intended purpose for lack of believability. Robinson argues for the importance of a preacher's believability:

We affect our message. We may be mouthing a scriptural idea, yet remain as impersonal as a telephone recording, as superficial as a radio commercial, or as manipulative as a con man. The audience does not hear a sermon, they hear a person—they hear you. (Biblical Preaching 25-26)

Consistency of the message. As with other crucial issues of the church, addressing Christian outreach consistently throughout the year gives the concept greater credibility as a way of life rather than an occasional event. Barna suggests that congregational response is connected to the consistency with which the pastor expresses public interest in and support of evangelistic activity. Evangelistic churches, among other things, have the pastor regularly (at least once a month) express encouragement to the church membership to focus on outreach (Evangelism that Works 170). Preaching messages on Christian outreach in different times of the year will help hearers connect outreach with various significant seasons such as Advent, Lent, and Pentecost as well as during ordinary time.

Research Methods

This study focuses specifically on the unique and primary role preaching plays in shaping the congregation's cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to Christian outreach. The sermons were guided by a commitment to communicating the biblical dimensions of Christian outreach. With the sermon content established through the biblical and theological review, the form of the sermons were shaped with attention to a conversational delivery style, illustrations, positive emotional appeal, and life application.

The sermon series consisted of twelve sermons preached over four months. The series was spread over several months in an effort to frame the sermons positively, preach unapologetically, while not focusing on a single campaign. The entire research design is presented in Chapter 3.

The primary method of gathering data for analysis was the pre-, mid-, and posttest surveys. Other researchers have used this format successfully to measure the changes in a congregation's response to biblical stewardship (Minger 24) and church health (Crowe 15). While John Marshall Crowe did not utilize the mid-test survey, Minger found it helpful, particularly in pinpointing the cognitive changes that came about in respondents early in the sermon series (110, 125-26).

In addition to the primary quantitative data, some qualitative responses were sought using open-ended questions on the mid-, and posttest surveys, participant debriefing session, and limited semi-structured interviews. John W. Creswell suggests that combining qualitative and quantitative methods allow for a convergence of results and fresh insights that would not have come from one method alone. Since any particular data source or method has its own bias, combining methodologies strengthen research

results and helps to neutralize that bias. This combining of methods of research is called triangulation (174-75).

A pilot or trial run of the surveys was conducted in three different congregations to test for ambiguity, confusion, or poorly prepared items (Wiersma 165). Changes were made consistent with the findings of the pilot tests.

This study was a cohort study in the quasi-experimental mode. A cohort study is a longitudinal study in which a specific population is studied over a period of time (Wiersma 162). Quasi-experimental mode is the term used to indicate that the participants of a study were not randomly assigned to experimental treatments; rather they compose a naturally assembled group (14). The participants in this study have self-selected themselves into the group by attending worship and are a naturally assembled group.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Facilitating positive responses from Christians to the subject of Christian outreach can be one of the greatest challenges in ministry today. The vast majority of churches are not effectively reaching out beyond their own congregations. Numeric and anecdotal information suggests that like most churches, St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, lacked effective Christian outreach; Therefore, I prepared and preached a series of biblical sermons on the topic of Christian outreach. This project examined the effects these sermons had on those who heard the messages. This research project was built on the premise that a preaching program about biblical Christian outreach (independent variable) can positively impact cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in a congregation (dependent variables).

The twelve individual sermons in the Christian outreach series are based upon the themes¹ that emerged from the theological and biblical review done for this study. The twelve outreach sermons can be found in Appendix A. The sermon series extended over a period of four months and were preached in groups of three, on consecutive Sunday mornings, with other sermon topics filling the space in between the groups of outreach sermons. This design helped to highlight the importance of Christian outreach. Since the topic was given extended attention over several months, the congregation could begin to understand, feel, and do Christian outreach as a part of Christian discipleship, rather than responding to the topic as a part of an isolated campaign or simply in response to my

¹ The themes of the twelve sermons were as follows: Trinity as missional community, Old Testament precursors to Christian outreach, Great Commandment before the Great Commission, the Great Commission is our mission, Holy Spirit's empowerment of outreach, Jesus' example: compassion, Jesus' example: incarnation, Jesus' example: Father led, Jesus' example: need meeting, Jesus' example: formation, Jesus' example: hospitality, Jesus' example: sacrifice.

project.

This study was a cohort study in a quasi-experimental design that measured the relevant variable at three times (pre-, mid-, and post-) with no comparison group. Surveys were used as the primary instruments along with a participant debriefing session and semi-structured interviews with volunteers who participated in the study.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study.

Research Question #1

What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach in the church before the preaching of the sermon series?

Without the answer to this question, accurately assess any changes the sermon series might have created in the congregation's response to Christian outreach would be difficult. The answer to this question created a base line of the congregation's response to Christian outreach before the introduction of the independent variable, which in this study is the twelve-week sermon series on Christian outreach. The answer to research question #1 will be derived from pretest questionnaires returned by participants who attend worship at St. James United Methodist Church.

Research Question #2

What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach in the church after the preaching of the sermon series?

Measured against the pretest baseline, participants' posttest questionnaires gave the additional measures needed to assess change in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach. Although the question can be answered

using pre- and posttest data, participants' mid-test questionnaires gave useful information that could not be gained by simply using pre- and post-study measures.

Research Question #3

What elements of the sermons' design and delivery were most effective in bringing changes in the cognition, affect, and behavior of the church to the subject of Christian outreach?

The most effective elements of sermon delivery and design were sought by using the sermon scale questions developed by Minger (87) and subsequently used by Crowe (160). The literature reviewed for this study highlights the use of a conversational delivery style, illustrations, positive emotional appeal, and life application as elements that aid in gaining positive responses from the listeners to sermons. The responses to the sermon scale questions should indicate which elements helped to facilitate change in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to Christian outreach.

Research Question #4

What demographic variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's patterned responses to Christian outreach?

The demographic variables that might influence or help to explain outcomes include age, gender, number of worship services attended, and number of years attending St. James United Methodist Church. These variables have been controlled by their placement on the pre-, mid-, and post-study questionnaire.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was all those who attend worship in a Christian church at least 25 percent of the time. The sample for this study was drawn from those

who attended the 8:30 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. Sunday worship services of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, at least 25 percent of the time in the first quarter of 2004. The weekly worship attendance records for the first quarter of 2004 were used to determine who fits the “once per month” attendance criteria. Every adult (age 18 or older) who fit the 25 percent worship criteria was mailed each of the three surveys. The mailing invited the attendee to complete and return each of the survey questionnaires. Those who responded to at least one survey were included in the findings of this study.

Instrumentation

A researcher-adapted survey was used as the primary tool for data collection. The survey was adapted from Minger (140-42). Crowe used Minger’s surveys in his study with minor changes for his subject matter, and two additional scales (160). The changes to the surveys in this study were made to reflect the difference in subject matter, as well as strengthen reliability in the behavioral subscale. The pre-, mid-, and posttest surveys used in this study can be found in Appendix B. Cover letters that were sent as a part of the pre-, mid-, and posttest can be found in Appendix C. Reminder cards sent one week prior to the return deadline for pre-, mid-, and posttest surveys can be found in Appendix D. Since the measures were used at three different times, the questionnaires were labeled for ease of identification.

The survey asks for responses in five categories. The first category asked participants to create an easily remembered identification with the first initial of the participants’ mothers’ maiden names and the last four digits of their social security numbers. This identification code allowed the surveys to be matched by participants without knowing the identity of the participants.

The second category was demographic in nature and asked participants to identify their gender, age, and the amount of time they have been attending the church. The mid- and posttest surveys also included a place where the participants could record their attendance at the outreach sermons.

The third category of questions appeared on the mid- and posttest surveys only. These questions focused on the elements of sermon delivery and design. The participants were asked to respond to questions with the sermons on Christian outreach in mind. Twenty-two questions composed this category measuring the respondents' views on the preacher's use of conversational style, illustration, life application, and positive emotional appeal. This section employed a five-point Likert scale.

The fourth category of questions provided measures for the dependant variables. The questions asked participants to respond to questions with the church's outreach to the community in mind. Twenty-four questions composed this category measuring the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. This section employed a five-point Likert scale.

The fifth category of questions appeared on the mid-and posttest surveys only and consisted of three open-ended questions. These questions invited the participants to share how their thinking, feelings, and actions had changed as a result of the sermon series. The content of the answers to these questions were categorized and analyzed.

In addition to the survey, a participant debriefing session and semi-structured interviews with volunteers who participated in the study provided useful qualitative data.

Minger reports the reliability of each of her scales and subscales as measuring at the .7 level or higher with the exception of the Behavior subscale, $\alpha \leq .34$ (with Affect and

Use of Illustration subscales rounded up to $\alpha \leq .7$ from $\alpha \leq .67$ and $.65$ respectively) (94-5). The adaptation of this instrument was in part to strengthen the Behavior subscale without weakening any of the other scales or subscales.

The adapted questionnaire was piloted with the Administrative Council of Wylie United Methodist Church. This congregation is located in South Abilene, only a few miles away from St. James United Methodist Church. The questionnaire was completed by each person in less than fifteen minutes. Nine people took the test. The feedback and results of this pilot showed that revisions to the format of the overall survey and the demographics sections of the questionnaire were needed.

Following this initial pilot test, a larger population was sought to pilot a revised questionnaire. The congregations of Aldersgate United Methodist Church and First United Methodist Church, both in Abilene, Texas, participated in the second pilot test with a total of nearly fifty respondents. This second pilot test provided enough data to calculate reliability on the subscales. Chronback's alpha reliability test as applied to pilot-test data showed acceptable scores ($\alpha = .7$ or higher) on all subscales except the cognitive ($\alpha = .60$), affective ($\alpha = .66$), and life application ($\alpha = .55$) scales. Table 3.1 reports the reliability coefficients for the revised pilot test.

The cognitive and affective subscales were only marginally reliable. The project moved ahead because a larger number of participants should bring reliability results into an acceptable range on all subscales. The unacceptable reliability in the life application subscale was noted, but the sermon scales were used as they appeared in Minger's study, which showed to be reliable.

Table 3.1. Revised Pilot Test Reliability

Subscale	α
Cognitive	.60
Affective	.66
Behavioral	.80
Conversational style	.77
Illustration	.78
Life application	.55
Positive emotional appeal	.77

Validity

Two levels of validity were sought for the independent variable—content and construct validity. For this study, content validity verified that the content of the sermons reflected the generally accepted meanings of the Christian outreach concepts from a biblical perspective. Each of the twelve sermons was reviewed by three preachers who verified that all the established parameters of the concept of outreach were covered by the sermon series. The review of this work by the dissertation committee provides another avenue to verify or challenge content validity.

Reviewing preachers also confirmed that the sermon series and the surveys covered the same concept of outreach, which provides a level of construct validity. The reviewers commented on the balance and wide range of biblical materials used for the sermon series, as well as the presence of relevant illustrations and application material.

Design and Procedure

The design and procedure of the study includes definition of variables and the process of collecting data, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and analyzing the data

gathered.

Variables

Three sets of variables were involved in this study: independent, dependant, and demographic.

Independent variable. The independent variable for this research project was the Christian outreach sermon series. The sermon subscales measured participants' responses to conversational style, use of illustration, positive emotional appeal, and life application.

Dependent variables. The three dependent variables this study measured are the worship attendee's cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses as a result of hearing the Christian outreach sermons. The change in cognition, affect, and behavior were measured by the pre-, mid-, and post-study questionnaire responses.

Demographic variables. The demographic variables in this study included age, gender, worship services attended, and number of years attended. Though these variables are not the main focus of the study, they may provide interesting insight into Christian outreach.

Data Collection

The worship attendees of St. James United Methodist Church who were in worship an average of once a month serves as the one test group. A pre-study questionnaire was mailed to each individual of the test group at their home two weeks prior to the first outreach sermon. The pretest questionnaire provided a baseline of the respondents' thoughts, feelings, and actions regarding Christian outreach (see Appendix A). A cover letter mailed with the survey invited the person to complete the survey and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by the Saturday prior to the beginning of

the sermon series. The cover letter also promised that no attempt would be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation and that all returned questionnaires would be included in the study (see Appendix C). One week before the questionnaire due date, a thank you/reminder card was sent to the sample (see Appendix D). To encourage a strong response rate, I placed reminder notes in the worship bulletin and the Church newsletter two weeks before the due date of the questionnaire. The Sunday before the first Christian outreach sermon, I encouraged everyone who received a questionnaire and who had not returned it to do so.

The mid-study and post-study questionnaires followed the same procedure, with the mid-test being sent the day after the sixth sermon and the posttest being sent after the final sermon. Reminder cards were sent one week before the due date. The mid- and posttest questionnaires retained the outreach questions in the same form as presented in the pre-study questionnaire. In addition, the mid- and posttest questionnaires asked the respondents to identify elements of the sermon design and delivery that assisted them in coming to a more complete understanding, experience, and practice of Christian outreach. The mid- and posttest questionnaires also contained three open-ended questions.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality is an important part of doing research with human subjects. In questionnaire administration, providing a level of confidentiality is an important ethical consideration. Procedures should be set up to allow respondents to remain anonymous (Wiersma 172). Whenever possible, anonymity is preferred since it reduces demand characteristics. When anonymity is not possible, identity and information must be held in the strictest of confidence. Providing a high level of

anonymity and confidentiality was important, along with communicating to the participants about anonymity and confidentiality.

I assured the respondents of anonymity in the cover letter that accompanied the mailing of the pre-, mid- and post-study questionnaires. To provide this level of anonymity, each questionnaire instructed respondents in the creation of a personal code that would be used in responding to all three questionnaires. The respondent's code started with the initial of the respondent's mother's maiden name followed by the last four digits of the respondent's social security number. This method of coding allowed me to track changes in the individual respondents over time, as well as the composite changes for the entire congregation. The advantage of giving directions for the criterion of the personal code was consistency in recording the same code each time. Whereas a completely self-created code may be forgotten by the respondent over time, this code was easily recalled and duplicated. Where anonymity was not achieved, through unintended connection between individuals in the congregation and the surveys they completed, strict confidence was kept.

Data Analysis

The statistical procedures employed in the analysis of the data collected were Chronback's alpha reliability test, zero-order correlation, MANOVA, Hierarchical Regression, and content analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in the worship participants of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, as a result of a twelve-sermon series on biblical Christian outreach presented over four months.

Four research questions directed this study. What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach in the church before the preaching of the sermon series? What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the subject of Christian outreach in the church after the preaching of the sermon series? What elements of the sermons' design and delivery were most effective in bringing changes in the cognition, affect, and behavior of the church to the subject of Christian outreach? What demographic variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's patterned responses to Christian outreach?

Profile of Subjects

The sample criteria were 25 percent or greater Sunday morning attendance at St. James United Methodist Church in the first quarter of 2004. The number of people who fit these criteria was 136. From this sample, 104 individuals returned at least one survey.

Pretest surveys were returned by ninety-four individuals, thirty-two men (34 percent) and sixty-two women (66 percent). The age of pretest respondents ranged from 19 to 90, with a mean age of 52.98 years ($SD = 16.22$). The time the participants had attended St. James United Methodist Church ranged from one month to forty-one years, six months, with a mean of sixteen years, three months ($SD = 13.34$).

Mid-test surveys were returned by seventy-two individuals, twenty-eight men (38 percent) and forty-six women (62 percent). The age of mid-test respondents ranged from 25 to 90 years, with a mean of 52.18 years ($SD = 15.45$). On average, mid-test respondents reported attending four of a possible six sermons ($SD = 1.32$).

Posttest surveys were returned by sixty-two individuals, twenty-three men (37 percent) and thirty-nine women (63 percent). The age of posttest respondents ranged from 19 to 81 years, with a mean of 53.08 years ($SD = 14.62$). On average, posttest respondents reported attending eight of a possible twelve sermons ($SD = 2.82$).

Table 4.1 illustrates the demographic variables at each measurement. The number of participants at each test decreased from the previous test, with the greatest decrease from pre- to mid-test. The gender percentages for male and female participants changed only slightly over the three measures. The mean age of respondents decreased slightly from pre- (52.98) to mid-test (52.18), then returned to near pretest level at posttest (53.08). The study spanned four months from pre- to posttest, so the mean age should have show slight increase at each successive measure. The number of sermons attended increased in a predictable manner.

Table 4.1. Demographic Variables for Pre-, Mid-, and Posttest (N = 104)

	Pretest	Mid-test	Posttest
n	94	72	62
Gender	Male =32, 34% Female =62, 66%	Male =28, 38% Female =46, 66%	Male =23, 37% Female =39, 63%
Age	<u>M</u> =52.98	<u>M</u> =52.18	<u>M</u> =53.08
Average Number of Sermons Attended	0	4	8

The sermon subscales were Conversational style, Illustration, Positive emotional appeal, and Life application and were part of the Sermon Scale. Table 4.2 reports the number of subjects, mean, standard deviation (SD), and reliability coefficients computed for each sermon subscale measured at mid- and posttest.

Table 4.2. Preaching Subscales (N =104)

Measure	Variable	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	α
Mid-test	Conversational style	68	25.47	3.07	.78
	Illustration	70	17.60	1.95	.76
	Life application	69	20.41	2.28	.76
	Positive emotional appeal	68	30.59	3.75	.86
Posttest	Conversational style	52	25.65	3.19	.78
	Illustration	52	12.96	1.84	.84
	Life application	51	12.27	1.79	.72
	Positive emotional appeal	50	30.58	3.83	.85

The dependent variables were cognitive response, affective response, and behavioral response and were part of the Outreach Scale. The number of subjects, mean, SD, and reliability coefficients were computed for each of the outreach scales at pre-, mid-, and posttest sessions as recorded in Table 4.3. This table also provides the data needed to answer research questions #1 and #2. Chronback's alpha reliability was also computed for each dependent variable at each measurement time.

Table 4.3. Outreach Scales (N =104)

Measure	Variable	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	α
Pretest	Cognitive response	88	30.91	3.99	.60
	Affective response	89	29.74	4.24	.77
	Behavioral response	89	27.31	5.21	.81
Mid-test	Cognitive response	73	31.60	4.16	.78
	Affective response	70	30.09	4.07	.76
	Behavioral response	69	27.72	4.19	.73
Posttest	Cognitive response	57	32.04	3.99	.71
	Affective response	56	29.95	4.33	.79
	Behavioral response	56	27.61	5.06	.81

The number of subjects, mean, and SD for the change scores between pre- to mid-test, mid- to posttest, and pre- to posttest were also computed. The findings are reported in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Change Scores for Outreach Scales (N =104)

Measure	Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre- to Mid-test change	Cognitive response	61	.78	3.11
	Affective response	60	.12	3.38
	Behavioral response	58	.47	2.94
Mid- to Posttest change	Cognitive response	48	.44	2.63
	Affective response	46	-.39	2.96
	Behavioral response	46	.24	3.47
Pre- to Posttest change	Cognitive response	49	1.27	3.71
	Affective response	48	.14	3.86
	Behavioral response	49	.31	4.76

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this study. The discussion of the qualitative data follows that of the quantitative data.

Quantitative Data

The Quantitative data was gathered from participant responses to pre-, mid-, and posttest surveys.

Correlations

Zero-order correlations were analyzed to determine any relationship between outreach scales and sermon sub-scales. This analysis addresses research questions #3 and #4. Cognitive response significantly correlated with conversational style ($r_{(46)} = .30$; $p = .04$), illustration ($r_{(46)} = .31$; $p = .03$), positive emotional appeal ($r_{(45)} = .30$; $p = .04$), and life application ($r_{(45)} = .30$; $p = .04$). Behavioral response significantly correlated with conversational style ($r_{(44)} = .33$; $p = .03$), positive emotional appeal ($r_{(43)} = .38$; $p = .01$), and life application ($r_{(44)} = .40$; $p = .01$).

Zero-order correlations were analyzed to determine any relationship between outreach scales and demographic variables. This analysis addresses research questions #3 and #4. Age seemed to correlate with affective responses ($r_{(41)} = -.37$; $p = .02$) with older respondents tending to have higher affective responses. Age did not seem to correlate with any other variable.

Zero-order correlations were analyzed to determine any relationship between sermon scales and demographic variables. This analysis addresses research questions #3 and #4. Analysis reveals that gender seems to be correlated with conversational style ($r_{(56)} = .28$; $p = .04$), and positive emotional appeal ($r_{(54)} = .33$; $p = .04$). In both cases,

women tended to have higher scores than men. Gender did not seem to be correlated with any other variable. Attendance seemed to correlate with conversational style ($r_{(44)} = .37$; $p = .01$) and life application ($r_{(43)} = .41$; $p = .01$). In both cases, those who attended more sermons scored higher on conversational style and life application. Attendance did not seem to be correlated with any other variable.

The analysis of the relationships between sermon sub-scales revealed unacceptably high correlations between all four variables as reported in Table 4.5. These high correlation values suggest covariance among all the sermon sub-scales. The four subscales appear to be too closely related to separate the unique contribution of each variable to the change in the dependent variables. Conversational style was the strongest predictor independent of the other three; therefore, only conversational style will be used as a predictor variable in the regression analysis. The other three subscales were dropped and are not discussed in that analysis.

Table 4.5. Sermon Subscale Correlations

	Conversational style	Illustration	Positive emotional appeal	Life application
Conversational style	1.0000			
Illustration	$r_{(56)} = .74$ $p = .000$	1.0000		
Positive emotional appeal	$r_{(54)} = .82$ $p = .000$	$r_{(54)} = .84$ $p = .000$	1.0000	
Life application	$r_{(55)} = .76$ $p = .000$	$r_{(55)} = .76$ $p = .000$	$r_{(53)} = .77$ $p = .000$	1.0000

Changes in Outreach Responses

I continued to address questions #3 and #4 with an all-within design MANOVA performed on these data. The main effect for time was nonsignificant. No significant

differences for combined cognitive, affective, and behavioral mean scores across time were found. The interaction term for response type by time was nonsignificant.

Nevertheless, the main effect for response type was significant ($F_{(2, 72)} = 29.77$; $p = .00$). A significant difference was found between the responses for cognitive, affective, and behavioral scores. Behavioral responses ($M = 27.86$; $SD = 4.37$) were significantly lower than cognitive and affective responses ($M = 31.89$; $SD = 3.53$; $M = 30.440$; $SD = 3.90$) respectively.

The change scores for mid- to posttest show a negative change in affective response ($M = -.39$; $SD = 2.96$), indicating curvilinearity (see Table 4.3). The curvilinearity of the data holds for affective and behavioral responses but is most prominent in the affective responses. Figure 4.1 illustrates this curvilinearity with the mean affective and behavioral scores at pre-, mid-, and posttest. The cognitive scores may indicate slight nonlinearity, but it is not likely to affect the analysis significantly.

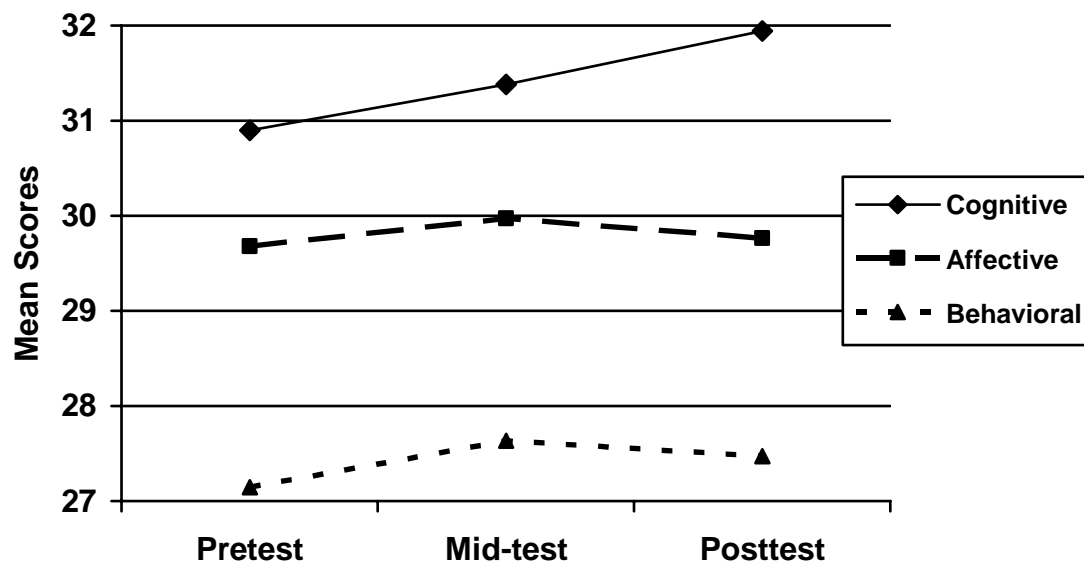


Figure 4.1. Cognitive, affective, and behavioral scores at pre-, mid-, and posttest.

Though the results the MANOVA showed non-significant differences in mean values for the dependant variables, a closer examination of the raw scores suggested that some change did take place. Significant changes may be hidden by the nonsignificant differences when examined collectively. Therefore, each dependent variable was examined separately using hierarchical regression.

Significant Predictors

Hierarchical regression was applied to these data, with the most proximal variables entered first, and the more distal variables entered last. This regression compared the change scores of the dependant variables from pre- to posttest. This analysis continued the process of answering research questions #3 and #4. The analysis for affective responses produced data that was curvilinear. Lawrence R. Frey, Carl H. Batan, and Gary L. Kreps explain curvilinear data to mean the relationships among the variables are best represented by at least one curve to represent the data on a scatter plot (358). This data was difficult to analyze and indicates a more complex relationship among the variables.

Cognitive response predictors. The regression model for the cognitive responses at posttest was significant ($F_{(5, 30)} = 5.94$; $p = .00$). The overall model accounted for 41.38 percent of the variance. The predictor term for attendance was nonsignificant but required for the equation.

The main effect for gender was significant ($F_{(1, 30)} = 5.89$; $p = .02$; $\beta = -.33$). Figure 4.2 shows that cognitive change occurred significantly more among male ($M = 5.06$) than female respondents ($M = 4.40$).

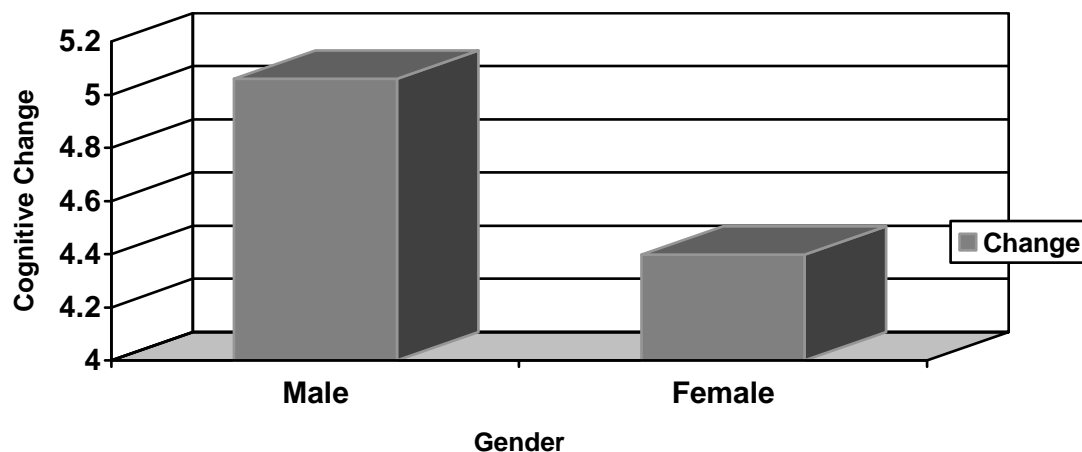


Figure 4.2. Cognitive change as a function of gender.

The main effect for age was significant ($F_{(1, 30)} = 13.35$; $p = .00$; $\eta^2 = 2.08$). Figure 4.3 shows that cognitive change was significantly greater among older respondents ($M = 6.81$) than among younger ($M = 2.65$).

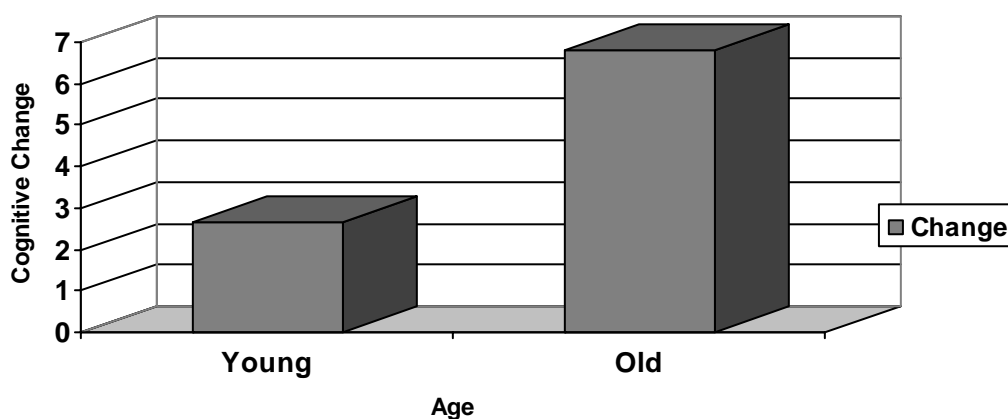


Figure 4.3. Cognitive change as a function of age.

The main effect for conversational style was significant ($F_{(1, 30)} = 3.97$; $p = .06$; $\eta^2 = .31$). Cognitive change occurred significantly more among those who rated

conversational style higher ($M= 5.04$) than among those who rated it lower ($M= 4.42$).

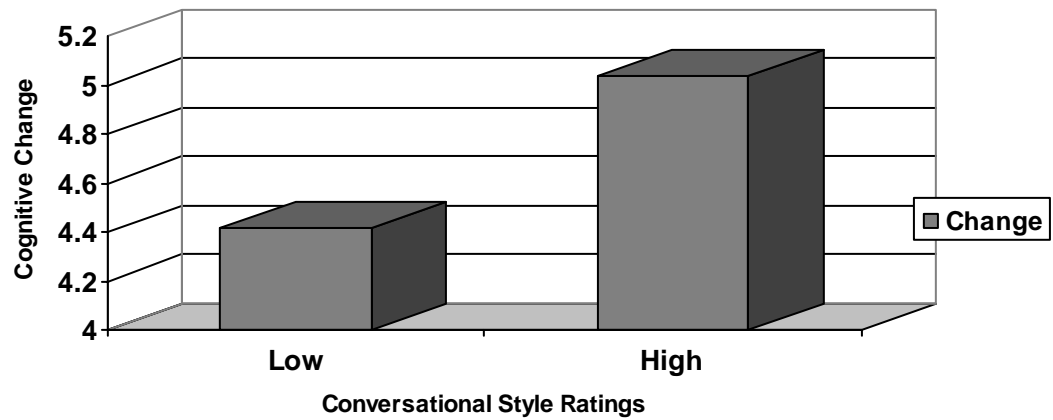


Figure 4.4. Cognitive change as a function of conversational style ratings.

The interaction of gender and age significantly predicted cognitive change ($F_{(1, 30)} = 10.52$; $p = .00$; $\beta = -1.85$). Figure 4.5 illustrates that older men ($M = 8.99$) reported greater cognitive change than all females (older $M = 4.62$; younger $M = 4.17$), and females in general reported greater cognitive change than younger males ($M = 1.13$).

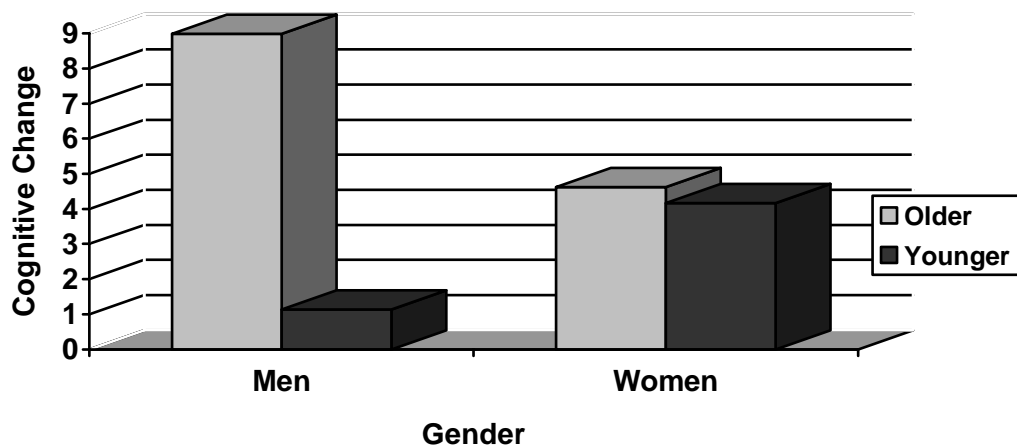


Figure 4.5. Cognitive change as a function of gender by age.

Behavioral response predictors. The regression model for the changes in behavioral responses from pre- to posttest was significant ($F_{(1, 47)} = 7.45$; $p = .01$). The overall model accounted for 11.84 percent of the variance. Conversation style was the only significant predictor ($F_{(1, 47)} = 7.45$; $p = .01$; $\beta = .37$) and the only predictor term in the equation. Changes in behavioral responses were higher for those who rated conversational style higher ($M = 5.76$) over those who rated conversational style lower ($M = 5.02$). Figure 4.6 shows that higher conversational style ratings tended to predict higher behavioral change scores.

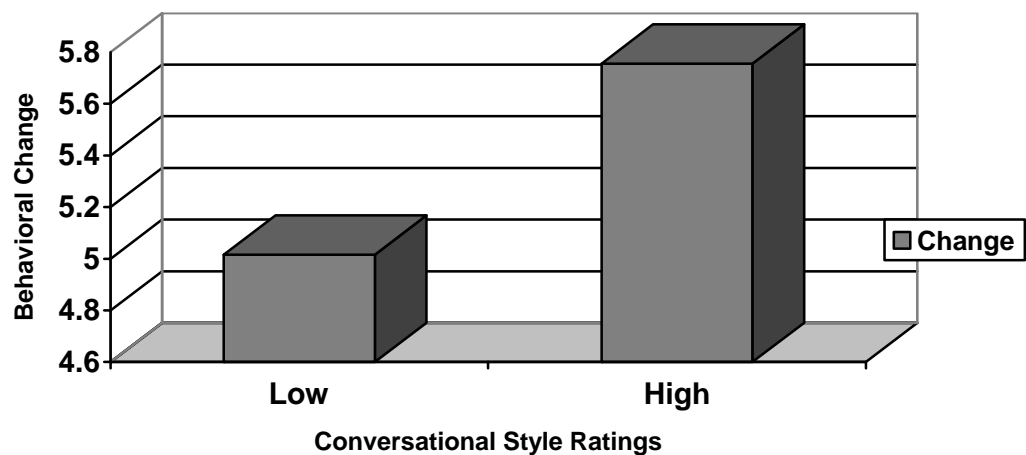


Figure 4.6. Behavioral change as a function of conversational style ratings.

Summary of Quantitative Data

Analysis revealed correlations between gender and conversational style, gender and positive emotional appeal, age and affective response, attendance and conversational style, and attendance and life application. Correlation analysis also showed an apparent covariance of the four sermon sub-scales. MANOVA analysis revealed that behavioral response was significantly lower than cognitive and affective response. Hierarchical

regression showed gender, age, conversational style, and gender by age to be significant cognitive response predictors. Conversational style was a significant predictor of behavioral response. Although the change in the dependent variables showed some nonlinearity, the regression analysis showed that some significant change occurred for cognitive and behavioral responses.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was gathered from participant responses to the survey, a debriefing session with participants, and semi-structured interviews with volunteers who participated in the study.

Open-Ended Questions

The three open-ended questions on the mid- and posttest questionnaires provided an opportunity for participants to respond with their own words. The first question asked, “How has your thinking about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?” The second question asked, “How have your feelings about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?” The third question asked, “How have your actions about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?”

Fifty-eight of the seventy-two (81 percent) mid-test respondents answered at least one of the three open-ended questions. Forty-six of the sixty-two (74 percent) posttest respondents answered at least one of the three open-ended questions. Three-hundred interpretable answers were gathered from the three questions on mid- and posttest questionnaires. The answers were analyzed by content and divided into five categories: (1) blank/no change, (2) generic positive change, (3) specific positive feeling or action change, (4) positive thinking change, and (5) negative change. In the analysis of answers,

specific positive feeling and action changes were difficult to distinguish, often grouped in the same answer; therefore, they were reported as one category. Table 4.5 reports the frequency of each category of answer for each question as well as the total number of answers in each category and the percentage each category contributes to the total number of answers.

Table 4.5. Answer Frequencies by Category

	Blank/ no change	Generic positive change	Specific positive feeling or action change	Positive thinking change	Negative change	Total
Mid-test thinking	13	4	27	13	1	58
Mid-test feelings	12	5	23	9	5	54
Mid-test actions	20	2	30	4	0	56
Posttest thinking	8	0	20	16	0	44
Posttest feelings	15	0	23	4	1	43
Posttest actions	13	4	23	4	1	45
Totals	81	15	146	50	8	300
%	27	5	49	17	2	100

A majority (71 percent) of respondents reported some kind of positive change. Nearly half reported positive change in feelings or actions. Among those reporting positive change in feelings or actions, three particular themes surfaced. The first theme was confidence. One respondent simply wrote, “I can do it!” Participants attributed their newfound assurance about outreach to the sermon series, “I feel I have the ability to do more now.” The second theme to emerge was motivation. Statements such as, “I am encouraged to increase my personal outreach,” and “I now feel empowered to do

outreach” show an increase in enthusiasm among respondents. The third theme that emerged was ownership. A participant commented, “The whole congregation, not just the leaders, needs to do outreach.” Another wrote, “It’s not just the pastor’s job.”

Along with these changes, several respondents reported being more aware of individual and group opportunities for outreach. Some respondents gave specific references to actions that had changed as a result of the sermon series. One noted, “I am thinking about it [outreach] more and have approached people to come to church that I never would have before.”

Positive change in thinking accounted for 17 percent of responses. Several reported a change in understanding the importance of outreach. Statements like, “I know how important it is now,” show that some respondents were able to attach an increased level of import to Christian outreach. Many reported that they thought of Christian outreach in broader terms, suggesting a possible change in the respondents’ basic understanding of the term.

Among those who reported no change, several commented that they already felt very positively about Christian outreach, so they saw no need for change. One respondent reported, “[I]t is far more important to live and act like a Christian! And quietly do for others as God’s will!” Some apparently perceived the project as a short-term campaign rather than an attempt to bring about long-term change. One respondent wrote, “We should live our lives as a witness on a daily basis verses [sic] getting all fired up on a temporary basis.”

Among those who reported negative change, some expressed continued anxiety about Christian outreach, while others wrote of lingering guilt regarding missed

opportunities to do Christian outreach. Although these changes are reported as “negative.” The reported guilt could be interpreted as positive change if it leads a participant into a change of behavior.

Debriefing Session

Thirty-five adults who participated in the project attended a debriefing session held on 6 October 2004, five weeks after the final outreach sermon was preached. The group answered several questions regarding their perspective on the project. Most believed the sermon series would have a lasting impact on the congregation, though some expressed doubt on how long the impact might last. They were pleased that the sermons addressed the whole congregation, not simply one segment within the church. The group believed that the project helped to bring outreach into focus for the congregation and to make people more aware of the importance and need for more outreach efforts. The people in the group also believed that the congregation was reaching out more into the community. Several people commented on specific events that have been enhanced or created due to the emphasis on Christian outreach.

When asked about the connection between the sermons and the surveys, the group believed the surveys easy to understand, and they saw clearly the connection between the sermons preached and the questions asked in the surveys. Some people reported wondering how I wanted them to answer. One participant worried that she would “mess up my study” because she had missed several of the sermons.

Several reported that they were confused early on about the exact meaning of “Christian outreach.” By the end of the sermon series, the meaning of Christian outreach was much clearer, indicating a mental shift of meaning for Christian outreach. One

reported, “I knew you wanted us to do something.” When asked, ten of those present (29 percent) reported that since the project began, they had actually done an outreach activity that they would not have done if they had not heard the sermons on outreach. Several people thanked me for the messages and said they believed they were very effective in bringing about positive change in the congregation. After the feedback portion of the meeting, I thanked the group for their help, discussed the preliminary findings of my study, and invited participants to volunteer for individual interviews.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Six participants volunteered to answer two questions regarding the long-term effects of the project. The interviews were conducted 4 ½ months following the last Christian outreach sermon. The interviews were done face-to-face or on the telephone. The first question was, “What lasting impact has the sermon series had on you personally?” The second question was, “What lasting impact has the sermon series had on St. James United Methodist Church?”

Each of the six volunteers agreed that the sermon series has had a lasting impact on them personally. One person interviewed said he is now inviting people regularly, and two people are now attending St. James regularly that first came at his invitation. Another admitted a real change in the way he understood outreach. In the church in which he grew up, they did outreach on Tuesday nights by going door-to-door. He now understands that outreach can be done in many different ways and that he does more of it than he originally thought.

Five out of the six volunteers interviewed believed the sermon series has had a lasting impact on St. James. Interviewees cited more excitement about growth, increased

number of visitors due to invitations, and a significant change from a focus on those already in the church to a focus on those outside the church. One volunteer suggested that the members of the congregation have been friendlier to each other as a result of the sermon series. Another believed that people are volunteering more for outreach activities.

Summary of Qualitative Data

A generally positive feeling about the research project exists among those who participated. The data suggests for many who participated the sermons may have caused a substantial shift in the way they defined Christian outreach. A majority of open-ended question responses (71 percent) suggested positive changes in the way participants thought, felt, or acted in regards to Christian outreach. All interview participants believed that the sermon series would have a lasting positive impact on them personally and five of six believed the series would positively impact on the congregation in a lasting way.

Summary of Major Findings

- Significant positive change occurred in participants' cognitive and behavioral responses from pre- to posttest.
- Significant positive change may have occurred in participants' affective responses from pre- to posttest.
- Significant positive correlations exist between sermon scales and the cognitive and behavioral scales.
- Covariance occurred among the sermon scales with Conversational Style emerging as the strongest predictor of change.
- Conversational style significantly predicted changes in cognitive and behavioral responses.

- Significant differences existed among the response types (cognitive, affective, and behavioral).
- Demographic variables of age and gender significantly predicted cognitive change.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study rose from my concern over the lack of Christian outreach among congregations I have served. Many congregations of various denominations have the same deficit observed at St. James United Methodist Church. During the first six months of my pastorate, I tried to understand the specific needs and concerns of the congregation. Through various methods, I realized that the congregation had a great desire to grow and wanted a pastor to lead them in ways that would facilitate growth, particularly numeric growth.

The preaching of Christian outreach sermons was my approach to facilitating growth by encouraging a positive, whole-person response to Christian outreach. With positive change in thinking, feeling, and actions regarding outreach, the congregation would have a greater chance of experiencing numeric growth. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in the worship participants of St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas, as a result of a twelve-sermon series on biblical Christian outreach presented over four months.

Major Findings

This study found several noteworthy results, which are organized around the summary of findings from Chapter 4.

Significant Change in Cognitive and Behavioral Responses

Quantitative and qualitative data show significant change in participants' cognitive and behavioral responses from pre- to posttest. Preaching that takes seriously not only the biblical message but the manner in which it is preached can have positive

effects on whole-person responses to the subject preached. In the area of outreach, preaching with an eye to whole-person responses can help move a congregation to reach out without resorting to membership campaigns or guilt-inducing tactics.

The findings of this study are consistent with that of Minger, namely that significant positive change was observed among the dependent variables. The differences in findings lie in the specific areas where significant change was observed. Minger found significant change in the composite stewardship scale as well as the affective responses (105-06). In this study, significant change was found in the cognitive and behavioral responses. Qualitative data in this study is consistent with the change found in the quantitative analysis regarding cognitive and behavioral responses.

Possible Significant Change in Affective Responses

Although the quantitative data regarding the affective responses was curvilinear and, therefore, difficult to analyze, qualitative data suggests positive change may have occurred in affective responses from pre- to posttest. Respondents' answers to open-ended questions, debriefing, and semi-structured interviews revealed many positive responses. Participants acknowledge that their feeling about outreach have changed as a result of the sermon series.

Sermon and Outreach Scale Correlations

Zero-order correlations revealed significant correlations among the cognitive responses and all four sermon elements (conversational style, illustration, positive emotional appeal, and life application). The analysis also found a significant correlation between behavioral responses and three of the four sermon elements. These correlations pointed to the possibility of these elements being predictors of change.

Sermon Scale Covariance

The apparent covariance among the sermon elements made difficult the analysis of the items as change elements. Conversational style was chosen for its strength in representing the independent variables in the regression equations. While Minger did not find covariance among the sermon subscales, she did note a high internal reliability of the composite of the sermon subscales ($\alpha = .91$) (103).

Conversational Style as Predictor

Conversational style emerged as an important element in bringing about cognitive and behavioral change among participants. The independent variable of conversational style was found to predict significantly both cognitive and behavioral change. The style in which sermons are preached seem to affect whether cognitive and behavioral change will occur. Pastors need to know the importance of learning and using the most effective preaching styles for their congregation. Conversational style seemed to be effective at St. James United Methodist Church. David L. Larsen argues that a natural delivery style can help a speaker move past hearers' mistrust and skepticism, allowing him or her to project a sense of authenticity, legitimacy, and approachability (178-79). Conversational style seems to help the speaker gain believability. The personal character of the speaker seems to come out easier through a natural, conversational delivery style. This character, as seen by the audience is, as Aristotle says, "almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion" (38). Preachers should seek to communicate in a way that not only conveys God's word accurately but does so in a believable manner.

Significant Difference in Response Type

Analysis revealed that the difference in response type between cognitive,

affective, and behavioral responses was significant. The higher cognitive and affective scores suggest that positive thinking and feeling about the subject of Christian outreach may not always transfer to positive actions. The concept of self-efficacy may explain this discrepancy. Albert Bandura believes that persons' lives are guided by their beliefs of personal efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy refers to belief in one's ability to execute the courses of action required to produce given goals. Persons' beliefs in their efficacy have wide-ranging effects including the actions they choose to pursue, how much they will put forth, how much stress they will endure, how much a person will persist in an action when faced with obstacles and failures, and the level of accomplishment they will realize (3). In the case of outreach behaviors at St. James, many may think and feel positively about the concept but believe the actions lie outside of their ability or control.

The use of the sermon aids, specifically illustration and life application, sought to encourage the listener with specific, applicable ideas and suggestions for implementation of outreach. The change in behavior scores may suggest that, though the behavioral scores were lower over the three measures, some success occurred in facilitating positive change in behavioral scores from pre- to posttest. The qualitative data on behavior changes also suggests some success in facilitating positive behavioral response to Christian outreach. Even responses from volunteers interviewed months after the sermon series suggest some lasting change in personal and congregational behaviors did occur.

Futures studies may choose to concentrate on models to bring behaviors in line with already positive thinking and feeling on a subject. This focus could be useful in the area of preaching on spiritual disciplines such as praying, reading Scripture, giving, and reaching out. Church attendees in general may have positive thoughts and feelings on

these discipleship issues but fail to translate these into consistent action. Another approach might be to implement other formats of communicating the biblical material on Christian outreach such as Sunday school classes, small groups, or special workshops.

Demographic Variables

The correlation of age to affective response revealed that older respondents had significantly higher affective response scores than younger respondents. The older respondents were more likely to report positive affective change. In facilitating positive, whole-person response to outreach, the older participants may be more likely to experience positive emotional change.

The correlation of gender to conversational style revealed that women had significantly higher conversational style scores than men. Female respondents were more likely to respond positively to the conversational style of the preacher. In facilitating positive, whole-person response to outreach, female participants may be more likely to respond to conversational style than men. Deborah Tannen suggests that while men feel more comfortable with “report-talk,” women tend to use “rapport-talk.” For most women, the language of conversation is primarily a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. She also points out that most public situations can be approached like private speaking (77). As in private conversation, women may be more interested and respond more positively to rapport-style preaching rather than report-style preaching.

The correlation of attendance to conversational style as well as life application revealed that those who attended more sermons had higher conversational style and life application scores. Conversational style and life application are two sermon aids that may

be more effective for people who attend more regularly than for those who attend less regularly.

The hierarchical regression analysis revealed several demographic variable predictors of change in other variables. The demographic variable of gender was found to predict cognitive change. In this study, men experienced significantly more cognitive change than women. Somewhat unexpectedly, a person's gender was a factor. Possible reasons include gender of the pastor (male) and the sermon aids, which may have more appeal to males in the congregation than females. Future studies may consider the difference gender makes in facilitating whole-person responses.

The demographic variable of age was found to predict cognitive change. In this study, older participants experienced significantly more cognitive change than did younger participants. Contrary to some prevailing thought, older participants may be more open to changing their thinking than younger participants. Another possible explanation is that older participants may have begun the study with lower cognitive scores and so had more room for change. A regression run on the cognitive responses for the pretest found that though age was not significant ($F_{(1, 47)} = 3.78$; $p = .06$; $\beta = .27$) it did suggest a trend. More rigorous design in the future might illuminate this finding. Further studies should consider the difference age makes in facilitating whole-person responses.

The interaction of the demographic variables of gender and age was found to predict cognitive change. In this study, older men experienced the highest cognitive change, followed by older and younger women. The smallest cognitive change came from younger men. Younger males may be less open to thinking differently about the subject of outreach. Somehow, the interaction of youth and maleness may affect

cognitive openness in general. Future studies should consider this important interaction and devise strategies to speak effectively to each sub-group.

The significance of these demographic variables is not consistent with Minger who found no intervening variables as significant predictors of change including gender, age, and number of years attending the church (103). The difference in subject matter, demographics, and length of sermon series may contribute to explaining this difference.

Implications of Findings and Practical Application

The findings of this study have several implications and practical applications in the area of outreach preaching. These implications and applications also have relevance for preaching and outreach in general.

Whole-Person Preaching

Preaching that keeps in mind the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of listeners will be more likely to facilitate positive change in the lives of those listeners. The preaching of a challenging topic such as Christian outreach can be significantly enhanced when the different aspects of the whole person are considered and addressed. The use of sermon aids such as conversational style, illustration, positive emotional appeal, and life application can assist the preacher in tapping into the domains of the listeners. The practice and intentional use of helpful communication aids should be an important part of a preacher's preparation along with diligent exposition of Scripture.

As noted in Chapter 2, preaching is essential to Christianity. This study affirms the usefulness of preaching as a means to life change. God has certainly worked among the attendees of St. James United Methodist Church through preaching, namely, change in whole-person response to the subject of Christian outreach.

Speaker Ethos

Although conversational style can aid in speaker believability, inconsistency between a speaker's words and life seriously undermines credibility. For this study, and others like it, the ethos of the preacher could be considered an intervening variable. William Wiersma writes that an intervening variable is one whose existence is inferred, but it cannot be manipulated or measured (34). As already noted, for each sermon, biblical material provides actual relevance, and the skill in which the message is brought to bear on the needs and circumstances of the hearer add functional relevance (Henderson 34). Even with actual and functional relevance, credibility must be earned through a speaker's willingness to lead by example.

Incarnational ministry is one in which the personal life of the minister is consistent with her or his public teaching. Stott suggests, "The sincerity of a preacher has two aspects: he means what he says when in the pulpit, and he practices what he preaches when out of it" (Between Two Worlds 262). Certainly Jesus' ministry was incarnational. Not only did he come as a human to humans, but he lived consistently with his teaching.

At the very beginning of my ministry at St. James United Methodist Church, I tried to provide an example of Christian outreach. On the Saturday before I preached my very first sermon in Abilene, I spent two hours in a nearby park in a personal servant evangelism project. Before I preached a word to the congregation, and ten months before I began the outreach sermon series, I was involved in personal Christian outreach. One of the people I met in the park that day was related to one of my church members. I was asked about my activity in the park on my first Sunday. Word of my outreach activity spread quickly through the congregation. I continued in periodic outreach alone and, at

times, invited others to participate. Through actually doing Christian outreach before I spoke about it, I gained a great deal of credibility with my congregation. By the time I began to preach about Christian outreach, the congregation knew I was committed to it personally.

While measuring the significance of ethos in this study is difficult, I reasonably assume it was significant and, to some degree, a necessary part of the positive change experienced at St. James United Methodist Church.

Countering Primary Factors of Ineffective Christian Outreach

As already stated, several primary factors are involved in the lack of effective Christian outreach in the American church. These primary factors are related to the cognitive, affective, and behavior of church members. The sermon series addressed these primary factors. The analysis on the responses to the open-ended questions suggest that the sermon series assisted many to overcome the cognitive, affective, and behavioral barriers to effective Christian outreach. While unimportance, fear, and inactivity characterize ineffective Christian outreach, respondents report changes that make outreach important, exciting, and doable.

Awareness of Outreach

The sermon series on Christian outreach not only raised the awareness of its importance but also increased the ability to see the many opportunities for individual and group outreach activities. The qualitative data revealed that participants' responses to Christian outreach was changed in that their awareness of the importance of Christian outreach was substantially raised.

Importance of Gender and Age

The unexpected significance of gender and age highlights their importance. A preacher should always seek to speak in a way that takes into account gender and age. One of the challenges in speaking to a diverse congregation is to find effective ways of communicating a message that will connect with people of different ages and both genders.

Long-Term Impact

Through qualitative data, this study showed that significant positive change in whole-person response has some level of longevity. Responses given over four months after the last outreach sermon was preached revealed the belief that this change in thinking, feeling, and acting regarding Christian outreach will have a lasting impact on St. James United Methodist Church. Future studies should find new ways to discover the long-term impact of the sermon series.

Contributions to Research Methodology

This study built upon the pioneering work of Minger. Crowe also used Minger's basic design in his work. This study sought to strengthen the overall design and use a more rigorous analysis.

This study confirmed the usability of the methodology developed by Minger. Crowe's study found negative change in all five of his scales (cognition, affect, behavior, relationships, and spirituality). Crowe's study was not consistent with the positive pre- to posttest change in the dependent variables (84-93).

Minger's framework can be adapted and applied to the subject of Christian outreach. This method, namely, the use of a biblical sermon series on a particular subject

of Christian discipleship, the use of pre-, mid-, and posttest surveys, along with pertinent analysis can produce interesting and useful results.

In Minger's study preaching was found to be useful in facilitating a positive, whole-person response to the subject area covered in the sermons preached. Preaching is effective in bringing needed change in the way people respond to a subject. Though some may suggest the usefulness of preaching in modern society has waned, Paul's words to Timothy are still relevant for the modern preacher: "Preach the Word, be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2). The task of preaching is still of primary importance for those who are called to it, and preaching is useful in bringing about positive change in the lives of the people who will hear.

The design of the study was strengthened by addressing the low reliability of the behavior scale, by gathering and studying qualitative data along with quantitative data, by extending the time of analysis through the use of a debrief session done five weeks after the final sermon was preached, and personal interviews taken 4 ½ months after the final sermon was preached.

The design was tightened with the use of sophisticated analysis. The use of MANOVA, hierarchical regression, and content analysis, along with the zero-order correlations provided greater depth and breadth of analysis for the data collected. Future studies should improve the design by using rigorous analysis that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data.

Limitations of the Study

The study supports the premise on which it was built; however, some limitations

to this project exist.

Curvilinear Data

The data analyzing the dependent variables (cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses) was curvilinear. Though the results were interpretable, the task was made more difficult. The curvilinearity brings some question of confidence to the results of the study. A stronger design might improve the precision of and the ability to interpret the results of the study.

Minger noted that stewardship sermons preached in short succession could be dismissed as a campaign, rather than understood as an important part of overall discipleship (page number). Minger's study made use of eight sermons over the period of six months. This study used twelve sermons over four months. The increase on the number of sermons over a shorter period of time may have caused some unintended negative response. Minger's intention was to move the congregation toward the Christian's response to God's grace in his or her life rather than a financial campaign intended to raise money for short-term needs (75).

Though the biblical material was wide-ranging and the sermons varied in structure, participants in this study may have grown weary of the challenging topic of Christian outreach. The study produced cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that increased from pre- to mid-test, but decreased over the affective and behavioral responses from mid- to posttest. This is the essence of the curvilinear nature of the data. One explanation may be that the subject may have reached a point of diminished returns somewhere between mid- and posttest. Future studies should determine the optimal number of sermons and the most effective schedule for preaching them.

Understanding of Christian Outreach

The curvilinear results may have been affected by an apparent lack of clarity with regard to the meaning of Christian outreach. The concept was very clear to me, but it may have been unclear to the participants. From the beginning of the study, I chose to reveal very little about the nature and hypotheses of this project. I decided not to give a detailed definition or description of what I meant by “Christian outreach.” My rationale was that I did not want to bias the results of the study, yet evidence suggests that some of the participants may have misunderstood the meaning of Christian outreach at the beginning of the study. The qualitative data suggests that a conceptual reset may have occurred regarding the meaning and implications of Christian outreach. Debriefed participants admitted that the term was unclear at the beginning of the study but was clearly understood by the end.

The Research Reflection Team organized to provide feedback for this research project gave helpful insight throughout this study, particularly in the area of the congregation’s collective understanding of the term “Christian outreach.” The group confirmed that they, along with the rest of the congregation, were somewhat unclear on the exact meaning of the term. They believed that a clearer definition of this term may have been helpful in determining the real change in thinking, feeling, and actions regarding Christian outreach over time.

My choice to limit the amount of information was intended to insulate the results from researcher bias but may have inadvertently caused distorted results because the participant understanding of the basic concept changed. One way of controlling for this problem would be the introduction of a control group who are given the definition of

Christian outreach at the beginning of the study. Clarifying the meaning of “Christian outreach” at the beginning of the study may very well improve the clarity and strength of the results.

Length of the Sermon Series

Minger’s study made use of eight sermons over the period of six months. This study used twelve sermons over four months. The increase on the number of sermons over a shorter period of time may have caused some unintended negative response. Though the Biblical material was wide-ranging, and the sermons varied in structure, participants may have grown weary of this challenging topic. The study produced cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that increased from pre- to mid-test, but decreased over the affective and behavioral responses from mid- to posttest. One explanation may be that the subject may have reached a point of diminished returns somewhere between mid- and posttest. Future studies should determine the optimal number of sermons and the most effective schedule to preach the sermons.

Covariance of Sermon Elements

Correlation analysis found an apparent covariance among the sermon elements. This covariance was unexpected and weakened the results of the study. Since Conversational style had the strongest effect among the four elements, it was chosen to represent the sermon sub-scales in the regression analysis. It is possible that one of the other three elements (illustration, positive emotional appeal, life application) or a combination of these elements would prove to be significant predictors of change. Future studies should seek to eliminate the potential of covariance, possibly through separation and labeling of elements in the questionnaire.

The significance of conversational style and the covariance of the elements may indicate that each element is important in the preaching of outreach sermons that are effective in bringing about a positive, whole-person response in Christian outreach. Minger found that these same sermon elements when considered as a composite registered a high internal consistency reliability that might suggest the significant results of her stepwise regression might pertain not only to positive emotional appeal but to all four sermon elements (103).

Self-Selection of Debriefing and Interview Participants

While useful information was gained through the debriefing and interviews, the participants for each were volunteers. Self-selection of subjects may have influenced the generally positive nature of the answers. Since this study relied upon the willingness of individuals to participate, this limitation may not have been avoidable.

Participant Mortality

Any study that employs a longitudinal design has the potential of experiencing some reduction in participant numbers over the course of the study. The loss of subjects in this study did not pose a serious problem. The number of participants that remained in the study over the three measures was adequate for the analysis performed. The loss of participants was due to a number of factors including family moves, decreasing interest in the study, as well as the timing of the end of the study, which occurred during the summer months where general attendance in worship can diminish.

Generalizability

This study was limited to the participants from St. James United Methodist Church in Abilene, Texas. Similar results may be limited to congregations that are similar

in size and demographic makeup. Another limiting factor may be the congregation's own understanding of the need to grow and reach out. Future studies should consider replicating this project over a diverse set of congregations.

Consideration of Individual Factors

Individual factors influence a person's whole-person response to Christian outreach. The scope of this study did not consider the complex variables of personality, personal history, and personal experience. Future studies should find ways to determine the impact these factors have on whole-person response.

Unexpected Conclusions

Though the data from this study did support the hypothesis that preaching a biblical sermon series on Christian outreach would facilitate a positive change in whole-person response to Christian outreach, some unexpected conclusions were discovered.

Nonsignificance of Attendance as a Predictor of Change

Quite unexpectedly, the number of sermons a participant attended did not significantly predict change in cognitive, affective, or behavioral responses. This finding is not consistent with Minger's study that determined that attendance did correlate with positive change in the dependent variables (116). The nonsignificance of attendance could be due to the length of the sermon series or the means of recording the attendance, namely, respondent-reported attendance rather than the use of attendance cards.

Valuable Insight into St. James United Methodist Church

I began the preaching phase of my study ten months into my tenure as the pastor of St. James United Methodist Church. The study has provided very valuable insights into this fantastic congregation I am privileged to serve. The insights gained may have

taken years to find without this study.

This congregation is diverse in many ways but unified in a faith that is active and willing to respond to challenges. The needs assessment prior to the preaching phase of the project allowed me to understand that my study would be addressing a specific, expressed desire to grow through reaching out.

Through the study, I have learned that the preaching style I have used since beginning my ministry and employed in this study is quite effective in eliciting positive response from the congregation. I will continue to refine and strengthen my preaching style to maximize impact.

St. James United Methodist Church Reaching Out

Not only did the project facilitate positive, whole-person response to Christian outreach, but these recorded responses have translated into increased outreach church-wide. The week following the last sermon in the outreach series, our congregation held a “Celebration of Friendship” Sunday. The results far exceeded my expectations, with almost twenty first-time individuals or families attending. Each of these first-time visitors were invited by regular attenders of our church. The congregation continues to be friendlier, more aware of newcomers, and more likely to invite people to worship. As a part of the increased outreach activity of the church, a new worship service has been proposed. Youth and adults have participated in servant evangelism projects, and congregational activities such as special worship services, Sunday school parties, and children’s programs are becoming outreach events. Overall, the desire to find effective ways to extend the ministry of Christ beyond the doors of the church with the purpose of bringing people into the church and to faith in Jesus Christ has been kindled at St. James.

This shift in thinking, feeling, and acting is not fully unexpected since this kind of change was the motivating factor in this research project, but I am very pleased and a bit surprised how well the congregation has responded to the challenging message of outreach.

APPENDIX A

Outreach Sermons

The Sent and Sending One John 20:20-22

18 April 2004

Story: Farmer playing it safe
That is where Jesus found the disciples, playing it safe because of fear.

Prayer

Context: Mary had seen the risen Lord; the disciples could hardly believe it. If they did believe it, they didn't act much like it. The door was locked, for fear of the Jews. (Review the things the disciples had done in fear after his death.)

Then, through the doors that were locked by fear, Jesus came.

As the Father has sent me ...

1. Jesus comes with reassurance and peace
 - a. The disciples were cowering together in apprehension (fear of the Jews)
 - b. Through the door that was locked by terror
 - c. "Peace" (x2). Although it was the typical greeting, the disciples needed the assurance of peace.

- What kind of fear does Jesus find us in this morning?
 - What are you afraid of? The future? (etc.)
- Do you hear His words of comfort and peace?

2. Jesus comes with proof of his power
 - a. They had heard Mary Mag's story, but the truth hadn't sunk in yet.
 - b. He came and showed his hands and side.
 - c. The disciples forgot their fear and were filled with joy.

- What proof do you need of His power?
- How does the reality of the resurrection embolden you?
- His presence should help with any fears you have of being on mission for Him.

So I am sending you

3. Jesus comes with a mission for his followers.
 - a. Just as Jesus was sent, he sends his followers
 - b. He breathed his Spirit on them.
 - b. The message he sends his followers with is one of forgiveness.

The mission we are sent on is the same mission God has been on since the beginning. The mission is to bring lost people to God. There is no mission, no mandate, that is greater than this one.

You Have a Bigger Job
Isaiah 49:1-7

25 April 2004

Story—Dad giving “bigger” jobs to some on camping trips. “I have a bigger job for you.” He would send you to get fire wood, scout water, begin to prepare the meal, or some other task that would benefit the whole group.

1. God’s “bigger” job for the Messiah

- a. Our passage this morning (Isa. 49:6) shows that God’s intention for the Messiah was not simply to redeem the lost of Israel but to bring salvation to the every nation. The light was not to be localized within a certain people, but starting from those people (Jews) the light would spread to all people.
- b. Jesus himself picks up the task of “lighting the world” (John 8:12).

2. God’s “bigger” job for his OT people

- a. God’s initial calling to Abraham was not simply to bless his descendents alone but that through him “all peoples on the earth will be blessed” (Gen. 12:3).
- b. As God’s chosen people, the Israelites would act as mediators between God and the people on earth. As Exodus 19:6 reads, “You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

3. God’s “bigger” job for the disciples

The ministry of the OT people of God, the ministry of the Messiah, was passed on to the NT people of God, the Church.

- a. Jesus picks up the light metaphor and applies it to his disciples in Matthew 5:14-16 (read and elaborate).
- b. Paul and Barnabas pick this idea up as they were ministering in Antioch. The Jews were becoming jealous because Paul and Barnabas were getting bigger crowds than they were. In Acts 13:46-48, Paul answers them that they had their chance to hear and believe their message; now it is the Gentiles who get their chance.

4. God’s “bigger” job for the twenty-first century people of God

This same ministry, the ministry of lighting the world is given to us as well.

- a. Light the world with your life—“good deeds” (Matt. 5:16).
- b. Light the world with your words—“be prepared to give an account ... with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15).
 - 1. with words as well. You can prepare for this. What has God done for you? Why do you hope when others despair?
 - 2. with gentleness and respect—the difference in shining your light for someone else to see and shining it in their face.
- c. Light shines INTENTIONALLY. We can’t just expect that our light just oozes out. If salvation is going to come to the spiritual Gentiles of our time and place, we will need to be intentional.

Story: Bigger Job—start the fire. In the rain, the wood is wet, my job was to start the fire.

The Motive for Ministry
Matthew 22:34-40

2 May 2004

Being a father has given me some of the best insights in my Christian life. My children have helped me learn a lot about the love of God. At each turn of their lives, I love them. Way before any of them could really love me. Now they needed me, they grew to know me and rely on me, but somewhere along the line, each of them has come to love me. I am not sure where that point came. I suppose it is something that starts imperceptibly, at birth, and then grows. I know my children love me more now than they did when they were born. As they have grown, they are more capable of love. I think that is a great picture of our love for God.

Prayer

Context: Jesus debating the Pharisees and then the Sadducees (two different groups). Well, the Pharisees came back and asked which command was the greatest. This was an often-debated question. Jewish rabbis counted 613 individual statutes in the law and often discussed and debated which were less important and which were more important.

1. Jesus' answer came from the Shema (Deut. 6:4) and the Levitical law (Lev. 19:18) where it stands as one of many in a long list.
2. Jesus' answer challenged them to think of love for God in a new way. It is easy to say we love God. Even to show love for God. But to tie love for someone else in with love for God is a bigger challenge.
3. Turn to Luke 10:25-37. Here an expert in the law gave the same answer to Jesus when questioned about the law. When questioned further, the expert asked, "Who is my neighbor?" The result was that the expert in the law, this one who wanted to justify himself, was challenged to go and love people. Go and be a neighbor.
4. 1 John 4:7-12, 19-21
5. Love for God is essential. It is foundational. It must come first. But love for others, brother, neighbor, others, MUST follow. They are so linked that one cannot exist without the other.
6. Showing my love for God, by loving others
 - Praying for others
 - Giving to and for others
 - Serving others (outreach event) on your own

End: My sons are growing in their ability to love. As they grow, they are putting their love into action. Loving God requires that we love with action. The recipient of that action is not simply God alone, but anyone and everyone we can serve in His name.

The Great Go-Mission
Matthew 28:16-20

23 May 2004

Since 1991, the adult population in the United States has grown by 15%. During that same period the number of adults who do not attend church has nearly doubled, rising from 39 million to 75 million—a 92% increase! (Barna Report, May 4, 2004). In a lecture I attended last year, one of my professors, George Hunter, noted that the number of secular people in the United States makes this nation the largest mission field in the Western hemisphere and the third largest in the world. If you think the Great Commission has nothing to do with you, then my intention this morning is to change that thought.

Prayer

1. Go! The one who has all authority sends you, so you better get after it!

- a. Some think this mission is only for a select few.
- b. Some think it can be easily brushed aside. This is not the great suggestion. If you are part of God's family, it is your mission. It is not optional.
- c. We are his ambassadors (read 2 Cor. 5:18-20) having received a restored relationship with God, we are sent to help others get it too. It is as simple as that.

2. Go! One of your main purposes in life is to make disciples

- a. So, fulfill your reason for existence (what a great antidote for the feelings of a meaningless existence)
- b. What a great privilege. It is of eternal significance.
(lifeboat story from the Titanic) What is the purpose of a lifeboat?
- c. The doubt of some didn't keep Jesus from sending them all.

3. Go! Your Lord goes with you, so don't worry, and don't hesitate, you have a great partner.

- a. He is before you, preparing the way, plowing the ground.
- b. He comes after you, mopping up your mistakes, making what you say and do useful.
- c. He is with you, leading and guiding, empowering and giving you joy in the process.

So, Go! Just do it. Obviously the Church in general has a large part in making disciples. If you are out there baptizing people, let me know, so I can come and help. If you are teaching, let me know, I'll come and learn from you. We do have those things available at the church though.

We need teachers. I could start two new SS classes next week if we had the teachers to do it. If God wants you to teach, let me know.

4. As you are going...

But here is what I know each and every one of us can do to make disciples. Each person here can share his or her own life message. If you have read Warren's Purpose Driven Life, then this will be familiar stuff:

Sharing Your Message

- 1. your testimony (how you came to be in relationship with Jesus Christ. That is unique to you, and only you can tell it)
- 2. your life lessons (what God has taught you)
- 3. your Godly passions (the issues God shaped you to care about most)
- 4. the good news (God's message of salvation from his work through your lips)

Empowered Witnesses
Acts 1:4-8

30 May 2004

I suppose we have all seen them. They are featured in late-night infomercials persuading us to try the next diet plan or the latest ab machine. Hit television shows like *Extreme Makeovers*, *While You Were Out*, and *Trading Spaces* use them, too. Of course I am talking about the dramatic before and after pictures. Invariably we see the woman who has lost 37 lbs. in 2 days on the hotdog diet, or we see the guy who has put 10 inches on his bicep simply by exercising for 6 minutes once a week. Even though many of these claims are too far-fetched to believe, the picture are hard to refute.

This morning, I want to show you a set of before and after pictures. This time, I'm not fronting for Atkins, Southbeach, or BoFlex exercise machines. I want to prove to you in dramatic relief the very real change the Holy Spirit can make in the life of the believer by considering how he has done it in the past.

Pray

1. The Holy Spirit changed Jesus' followers into witnesses

- a. followers can live quietly, passively, just learning and tagging along with Jesus.
- b. witnesses must step forward and be willing to testify. Witnesses simply tell publicly what they have personally seen and experienced.

c. The word for "witness" is the word *martus*. It denotes one who testifies or bears witness to what he has seen or knows. It came to be synonymous with one who would die for his or her faith because bearing witness and risking death used to go hand in hand. In many parts of the world, it still does.

2. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit changed the fearful, futile, huddled followers of Jesus into bold, successful, deployed witnesses.

- a. From fearful followers to bold witnesses
 from the time Jesus called these men they were all less than perfect. It took some courage to follow Jesus, but when things got really tough, they fled. After Jesus' death, we find them behind doors that fear locked.

I asked once before, what doors are you locked behind? What fear do you have when I talk about being witnesses for Jesus?

But the Spirit made them BOLD (They feared not for their own lives).

- b. From futile followers to effective witnesses
 Not only were they fearful, but they were futile. Their results were less than spectacular. But the Spirit made them effective. (3000 on the first outreach even after the Spirit came)

- c. From huddled followers to deployed witnesses
 They were so stuck. They were hunkered down, isolated, and separated from the world that needed to hear what they had to say.

3. The Holy Spirit can empower you to be God's witnesses

Story: In 1983 John Sculley quit his post at Pepsico to become the president of Apple Computer. He made the risky move from his lucrative position atop one of the most prestigious companies in America to lead the unproven little outfit that offered no guarantees, only the excitement of one man's transforming vision. Sculley says he made the move after Apple cofounder Steve Jobs goaded him with the question, "Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?" (Zachary).

The original disciples were a handful of unlikely misfits, timid and largely ineffective. Yet, the arrival and empowerment of the Holy Spirit transformed those frightened, awkward, reluctant men into strong-hearted, unintimidated, invincible witnesses of God. Instead of staying huddled together, instead of spending the rest of their lives with “sugared water,” they became directly involved in changing the world. Once the Spirit came upon them, they were never the same.

After the Holy Spirit came on them, they “turned the world upside down.” Are you going to spend your life selling sugared water, or do you want to be involved in changing the world? The difference is ... the Holy Spirit.

God wants to make you and me witnesses. But only if you will take the challenge, and allow the Holy Spirit to transform you into an empowered witness.

Pray.

We can be followers of Jesus and still be fearful, futile, huddled, but to be witnesses, we need the Holy Spirit to make us bold, effective, deployed witnesses.

If you have ever felt like a fearful, futile, huddled follower, the Holy Spirit’s job is to transform you into a bold, effective, deployed witness.

He Feels Our Pain
Matthew 9:35-38

6 June 2004

Compassion: Sorrow or pity brought on by the distress or misfortunes of another. Sympathy. In Greek five words are translated into our English word compassion. The one in this passage is the most powerful of these words. The root of the word is “bowels, intestines.” And it means to feel deeply, to be moved as to one’s inwards (Barclay, “the Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1,” 354). Today we talk about Jesus’ compassion, and ours.

Pray

1. Except for 3 of Jesus’ parables (unmerciful servant, prodigal son, and good Samaritan) it is used exclusively of Jesus. It is as if the writers are telling us that Jesus’ compassion was no ordinary pity.

- a. Jesus with those who are hungry
- b. Jesus with those who are ill
- c. Jesus with those who are mourning
- d. Jesus with those who are confused and spiritually lost

In this way, Jesus was so different. When we see a crowd, when we see people, we may see their condition, we may just see people, but Jesus saw people in need.

2. It always led Jesus to DO SOMETHING.

- To feed the 4 and 5 thousand,
- To heal the leper, blind, and lame
- To comfort and to raise from the dead
- To call for his followers to pray and ultimately to go out and harvest those who are spiritually lost.

3. God chooses to be moved by our pain. According to ancient Greek thinkers, the highest and essential characteristic of God is apathy, the absence of emotion. They believed that if God felt, if God was moved by his creation, then creatures had power over God, which made him no God at all.

Yet our God, though almighty and supreme, chooses to be moved by his creatures.

4. What about you and me? (rest of the passage) Jesus calls his followers to pray, then he sends them.

He Is One Of Us!
John 1:14

11 July 2004

Have you ever wondered just how human Jesus really was?

God, who smashes his finger, who tells jokes, who loved his mother, who smelled bad, (is that sacrilegious?) Jesus got sick, who got tired, who had friends and enemies.

At Christmas time, we usually hear about Jesus being born a baby. How can we escape it? But in July? Singing a Christmas hymn for our closing song? It makes you wonder who I've been hanging out with.

Pray

1. The Word became Flesh

- in-carne-tion = to be made meat, or flesh. The state of being clothed with flesh. To become human.
- How are we to understand God. How is God in his infinite power, outside of time and space. The creator of all that it, be understood by mere mortals?
- Bird illustration
- He really came to be one of us

2. Dwelled among us

- The message: "The word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood."
- God didn't stay distant, he came near.
- He didn't move into a sprawling ranch in Crawford, or a palatial estate in Pittsburg. He came to a humble working-class family.

3. We have seen his glory, full of grace and truth

- The message: We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.
- He made the invisible God visible.

4. Your job and mine is to make the invisible God visible

- Philippians 2:5-8
- Little girl—"If Jesus lives inside of me, and Jesus is bigger than me, won't he show through?"
- Does Jesus show through? Are you making the invisible God visible?

Closing Hymn—Maybe in July, we can see this different.

#240 Hark the Herald Angels Sing (read vs. 2)

Letting God Lead
Acts 16:6-10

18 July 2004

Have you ever been lost? (hard for us guys to admit).

There are three kinds of lost. 1. You don't know where you are. 2. You don't know where you are going. 3. You don't know how to get where you are going. I suppose at one time or another I have been lost in each of these three ways.

Pray

Context: Throughout the book of acts, the Spirit of God has been moving the Church out. Through good and bad things, God has been leading his people to stretch and grow. Paul in particular was used by God. By the time we get to Chapter 16, Paul has been around the block once already. He is a seasoned veteran of missionary travel, and he had preached and taught and established churches all along the way. Now, he is on his second journey...

There are some important keys to letting God lead in your life and in the life of the church.

1. Keep the mission in mind.

- Paul never forgot what he was all about. He knew where he was going. From the time he was knocked off his horse on the way to Damascus, he was given a job. "Do what I say." Later he learned what that would be—to preach his word.
- Your job is to glorify God. That is how you know you are where God wants you to be. You may not know specifics, but you know where you are going.
- John 5:17, 19, 30—His mission came from God. He knew where he was God because God told him.

2. Keep moving.

- It was in the midst fulfilling God's purpose that Paul was guided. He kept after it.
- You can't steer a parked car.
- Go with the best light you have (old Quaker saying).
- God will give you the next step when you need to take it.

3. Keep open.

- Paul made his plans; often things went according to plan.
- At times, God changed the plan.

4. Keep willing.

- When God changed the plan, Paul had a decision to make.
 For many of us, knowing God's will has always been a challenge. What does he want me to do? What should I not do? Abe Lincoln said, "I am satisfied that when the almighty wants me to do or not to do any particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know" (Water 457).

What does that mean for St. James?

God is working

He will lead. And we will get where he wants us to go.

Do you:

1. know where you are.
2. know where you are going,
3. know how to get where you are going.

Meeting Needs, Opening Hearts
Matthew 14:13-21

25 July 2004

Lately I have been sharing a lot about Jesus' ministry. In every aspect of life and work, Jesus is the model for outreach. As a church we often ask God to bless our ministry, and that's fine and good. But I wonder if, instead of asking God to bless our ministry, we might instead ask God what ministry he will bless. So, my messages of late have considered the principles of Jesus' ministry that I believe we must seek to implement in our ministry here at St. James. If we do that, we are seeking the ministry God will bless and use.

Several weeks ago, I shared about Jesus' compassion, that is, sorrow or pity brought on by the distress or misfortunes of another. It is an emotion that never failed to move Jesus to action.

The first action of Jesus was to become one of us. Incarnation is not simply a fancy theological word, but a real-life happening. When Jesus was born, he made the invisible God visible.

As Jesus lived among us, he experienced for himself human need. He felt the pains of life. He also felt the pain of others. So, through his compassion, moved to get involved, Jesus engaged in need-meeting ministry. The actions that Jesus took were need-meeting actions.

1. He knew the need

Do we know the need?

2. He was moved with compassion

Are we moved with compassion?

3. He did something

Do we do something? (\$ to service center, food bank, clothes donations, special offerings, other ministries)

4. He made their "not enough" more than enough

He did it then; he can do it now.

5. Jesus' main purpose was not simply to meet physical needs, but to draw people to God.

This, too, should be our main purpose. Not simply meeting needs, but showing people where their eternal needs can be met. Jesus addressed the real-life needs of people while seeking to draw them to God where their most important needs could be met. But, I don't know about you, but if I were starving, news about forgiveness, the love of God, and heaven might have to take a back seat. I need food.

I can't get away from James 2:14-16 (read).

I know my life isn't there yet. I know this church isn't there yet, but I know it needs to be.

Application—(taken from Jessica's youth lesson) write down 3 names of people you could serve this week. Pray for opportunities to serve. Then DO IT.

Teachers of the Kingdom
Matthew 7:24-29

8 August 2004

From early on in his ministry, Jesus spent a great deal of time teaching and preaching. Jesus' compassion led him to engage in need-meeting ministry. But simply meeting physical and emotional needs was not enough for Jesus. I believe that meeting felt needs was an avenue to the heart and mind of a person. "*The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.*" Do you think that is true, ladies? And so it is true that when our physical needs are met, we begin to be open to addressing our spiritual needs, which is where Jesus' teaching and preaching comes into play. Jesus' compassion led him to instruct people about the kingdom of God. Jesus presented the reality of God's kingdom in practical, easy to understand stories.

Our passage this morning ends the famous "Sermon on the Mount." It was Jesus' "official" teaching about the kingdom of God. In this series of teachings, Jesus reveals to those who will listen that God's kingdom was an "inside-out" affair, rather than "outside-in." You see, God would work from a changed heart, shaping and molding his people. Jesus was inviting people to a kingdom of a changed heart, not a kingdom of external regulations.

This last word in Jesus' Sermon on the mount speaks of how we each should treat the words that came before.

1. People need to listen to Jesus

- How can they unless we speak for Him?
- You may be the only "Bible" anyone ever reads
- How can they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:13-15)

2. People must listen and do what Jesus said

- How can they unless they see it first in us?
- Paul wrote, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Part of our outreach to a world who doesn't believe in Jesus is to speak the words of Christ and to live the words of Christ we speak.

You and I are called to be teachers of the kingdom through our words and actions. Who was it that spoke and lived the truth of Christ to you? Who will you speak and live the truth of Christ for?

Crossings Barriers, Welcoming Strangers
John 4:4-30

15 August 2004

I don't know about you, but I believe God doesn't waste a minute of our lives. God can and will use every experience, every situation, every day we have lived for our good and his glory. I can't say that I have always believed that. (Jill and I attending ATS together, graduation, engagement, and getting a job at Olive Garden.)

What I learned at Olive Garden that year has served me well (pun intended). I have said before I learned more that year as a waiter than I did in any single class in seminary.

- I learned multitasking
- I learned perseverance
- Most important, I learned HOSPITALIANO!

1. Our passage is rich with insight

2. I notice the hospitality of the woman at the well. She was willing to be a servant to this stranger.

3. I marvel at the hospitality of Jesus

- a. He just looked at people differently than we do
- b. He always seemed to start out as a guest and end up as the host.
- c. He crossed barriers (gender, race, geography, theology)

4. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament commandments regarding the welcoming of strangers (Exod. 22:21). Several times in OT Scripture we see the seriousness of hospitality (Abraham and the three visitors in Gen. 18)

5. What can we do to be welcoming, to have our own brand of Hospitaliano?

Nametags, smiles, welcome, sensitive to needs, invitation, lunch, visiting with visitors after the service.

We are doing this. Are you getting ready for our celebration of friendship? Have you invited someone to come to worship with you?

His Sacrifice, and Ours

Hebrews 10:9-12

22 Aug. 2004

Have you been watching the Olympics? The level of athleticism is phenomenal. It's amazing to see how fast, strong, and graceful these athletes are. What does it take to be an Olympian? Talent, athletic gifts, certainly. But there are a lot of people who have athletic abilities. What makes the difference? Dedication and sacrifice, you better believe it. Following her gold-medal win in the women's gymnastics all-around, Carly Patterson said, "I've worked all my life for this" (Celizic). I heard that synchronized swimmers are in the pool 8-9 hours a day, 6 days a week. That is sacrifice.

Sacrifice: Destruction or surrender of some desirable thing in behalf of a higher object. For Olympians, the sacrifice of a "normal" life is worth the higher object of the glory of sport, and possible gold medal.

For Jesus, the sacrifice of his days of service, and the sacrifice of his very life though a desirable thing, was certainly on behalf of a high object. But, was it a higher object? I'm not sure any of us can measure the value of Jesus' life or the value of all who have been saved through the loss of that life.

1. Jesus' sacrifice was and is the greatest ever.

a. "Greater love has no man than this, than he give his life for his friend" (John 15:13).

Yet, his sacrifice was even greater than any human giving his life for others. (I am not diminishing the sacrifice of people who have died for others in war and in peace.)

b. He was perfect, without sin. 2 Cor. 5:21 (he had no sin of his own to be punished.

2. Our Sacrifice can be great as well (compare his sacrifice with ours)

Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15-16

- His sacrifice saves from sin; ours can only point to the savior (although love covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8)
- His sacrifice was a dying sacrifice; ours is a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)
- His sacrifice was unrepeatable; our sacrifice must be repeated (??)

How can you sacrifice yourself for others?

The sacrifice of prayer, the sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of invitation, the sacrifice of service, the sacrifice of witness, the sacrifice of care, the sacrifice of giving, the sacrifice of time, the sacrifice of talent, the sacrifice of positivity

Story of sacrifice that brings others to Christ (Emmaus)

APPENDIX B

Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1

In order to assure complete anonymity, please fill in the following spaces to create your own personal code (for internal study use only):

The first initial of your mother's maiden (unmarried last) name _____

The last four digits of your Social Security number _____

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____ 2. Your age: _____

3. Number of years and months you have attended St. James United Methodist Church
Yrs _____ Mo. _____

Please respond to the following statements with the Church's outreach to the community in mind. Please circle one number to the right of each statement that most closely corresponds to your view.

		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
4.	Christian outreach is the most important biblical mandate for the Church.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Christian outreach makes me feel anxious.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am not involved in Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I believe Christian outreach is primarily the pastor's job.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I reach out to others willingly.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	My lifestyle is a good witness to unbelievers.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Taking care of church members is more important than Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Reaching out to people outside the church makes me happy.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I take advantage of opportunities to reach out.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Christian outreach is the mission of the church.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Reaching out is a burden.	1	2	3	4	5

15.	I don't reach out because I am inexperienced.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I don't know how to do Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I am enthusiastic about being involved in Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I do Christian outreach on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Preaching and teaching on Christian outreach is very important.	1	2	3	4	5

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		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
20.	Reaching out shows I love God.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The time I give to Christian outreach is a priority in my week.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I don't think outreach is important.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Christian outreach brings me satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I am too busy to reach out.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The primary reason to reach out is to get more church members.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I want to enjoy reaching out more.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Reaching out is something I have given time to in the last month.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking the time to respond.
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Questionnaire 2

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21.	The time I give to Christian outreach is a priority in my week.	1	2	3	4	5
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27.	Reaching out is something I have given time to in the last month.	1	2	3	4	5

Sermons on Christian Outreach

Please respond to the following statements with the sermons on Christian outreach in mind.
Please circle one number to the right of each statement that most closely corresponds to your view.

		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
28.	I felt like the preacher was talking with me.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	The stories used in the sermons helped me to understand the Bible better.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	The sermons in this series on Christian outreach were encouraging.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	After I heard the sermons, I thought, "I can do that!"	1	2	3	4	5
32.	The sermons on Christian outreach communicated that the preacher cares about my life.	1	2	3	4	5

33.	The stories in the sermons made the sermons more meaningful.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	The preacher seemed hesitant to preach on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I understand how I could act on the sermons in my personal life.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	The preacher had strong eye contact.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I would prefer a sermon without stories or illustrations.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I tended to feel discouraged after I hear the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5

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		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
39.	It is helpful to have sermons on Christian outreach not directly connected with increasing church membership.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I wish the preacher would stand behind the pulpit to deliver the sermons.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	The sermons on Christian outreach touched my feeling and emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	The sermons were pleasurable to hear.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I have gained new insights as a result of hearing the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	At points the sermons made me smile, laugh, or chuckle.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	The sermons were preached confidently.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	At times, I felt the preacher's sermons and his life were not entirely consistent.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I was able to follow the logic of the sermons.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	God spoke to me through the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I am glad that I heard the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5

50. How has your thinking about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?

51. How have your feelings about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?

52. How have your actions about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?

53. Please check which of these sermons you heard:

☐ The Sent and Sending One (April 18)

☐ You Have a Bigger Job (April 25)

☐ The Motive for Ministry (May 2)

☐ The Great Go-Mission (May 23)

☐ Empowered Witnesses (May 30)

☐ He Feels Your Pain (June 6)

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41.	The sermons on Christian outreach touched my feeling and emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	The sermons were pleasurable to hear.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I have gained new insights as a result of hearing the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	At points the sermons made me smile, laugh, or chuckle.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	The sermons were preached confidently.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	At times, I felt the preacher's sermons and his life were not entirely consistent.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I was able to follow the logic of the sermons.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	God spoke to me through the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I am glad that I heard the sermons on Christian outreach.	1	2	3	4	5

50. How has your thinking about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?

51. How have your feelings about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?

52. How have your actions about Christian outreach changed as a result of the sermon series?

53. Please check which of these sermons you heard:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Sent and Sending One (April 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> He Is One of Us! (July 11) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You Have a Bigger Job (April 25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Letting God Lead (July 18) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Motive for Ministry (May 2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Needs, Opening Hearts (July 25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Great Go-Mission (May 23) | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers of the Kingdom (August 8) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Empowered Witnesses (May 30) | <input type="checkbox"/> Crossing Barriers, Welcoming Strangers (Aug. 15) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> He Feels Your Pain (June 6) | <input type="checkbox"/> His Sacrifice, and Ours (Aug. 22) |

Thank you for taking the time to respond.
Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided.

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Cover Letters

Cover Letter for Pre-Sermon Series Questionnaire

Rev. Shane Brue
3100 Barrow Street
Abilene, Texas 79605

April 3, 2004

Dear Friend,

You may be aware that I have been working on a dissertation project for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. The first three chapters of the dissertation are completed and approved by my faculty committee. Most of my library research for the project is now complete. It is time to collect data from a real, live congregation. I am writing to ask for your assistance.

Here is how you can help:

1. Complete the enclosed questionnaire. It will take no more than 15 minutes to finish. Note that there are two pages.
2. Place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.
3. Place the envelope in the mail by Saturday, April 17th.

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation. The personal code created by you for each survey will ensure anonymity. The code you create will be destroyed after the project is complete.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Shane Brue

Cover Letter for Mid-Sermon Series Questionnaire

Rev. Shane Brue
3100 Barrow Street
Abilene, Texas 79605

June 7, 2004

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your participation in my dissertation project. There are twelve sermons in the series for this project. I have now preached six of those sermons in worship at St. James United Methodist Church. At this half-way point in the series, I write to seek your assistance once again.

Here is how you can help:

1. Complete the enclosed questionnaire. It will take no more than 15 minutes to finish. Note that there are three pages. There are additional questions regarding the outreach sermons I have preached.
2. Place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.
3. Place the envelope in the mail by **Monday, June 28**. (If you can, please return this survey today.)

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Shane Brue

Cover Letter for Post-Sermon Series Questionnaire

Rev. Shane Brue
3100 Barrow Street
Abilene, Texas 79605

August 23, 2004

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your participation in my dissertation project. I have now preached all twelve of the sermons for my project in worship at St. James United Methodist Church. At the completion of the sermon series, I write to seek your assistance once again.

Here is how you can help:

1. Complete the enclosed questionnaire. It will take no more than 15 minutes to finish. Note that there are three pages (*page 2 is on the reverse of page 1*). There are additional questions regarding the outreach sermons I have preached.
2. Place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.
3. Place the envelope in the mail by **Friday, September 10**. (If you can, please return this survey today.)

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Shane Brue

APPENDIX D

Reminder/Thank You Cards

Pretest Reminder/Thank You Card

Thank You

For completing and returning the questionnaire for my dissertation research. Your participation in my project is invaluable to me and I appreciate it very much.

If you have not yet mailed your questionnaire back, it is not too late to do so. Please take a few minutes to fill out the two-page survey you received from me, and drop it in the mail by Saturday, April 17. Your response will make my study much stronger.

Blessings,

Shane Brue

Mid-Test Reminder Card

Thank You

For completing and returning the questionnaire for my dissertation research. Your participation in my project is invaluable to me and I appreciate it very much.

If you have not yet mailed your questionnaire back, it is not too late to do so. Please take a few minutes to fill out the two-page survey you received from me, and drop it in the mail by Monday, June 28. Your response will make my study much stronger.

Blessings,

Shane Brue

Posttest Reminder Card

Thank You

For completing and returning the questionnaire for my dissertation research. Your participation in my project is invaluable to me and I appreciate it very much.

If you have not yet mailed your questionnaire back, it is not too late to do so. Please take a few minutes to fill out the two-page survey you received from me, and drop it in the mail by **Friday September 10**. Your response is very important, and will make my study much stronger.

Blessings,

Shane Brue

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